

EAST LONDON HISTORY SOCIETY  
PROGRAMME 1989-90

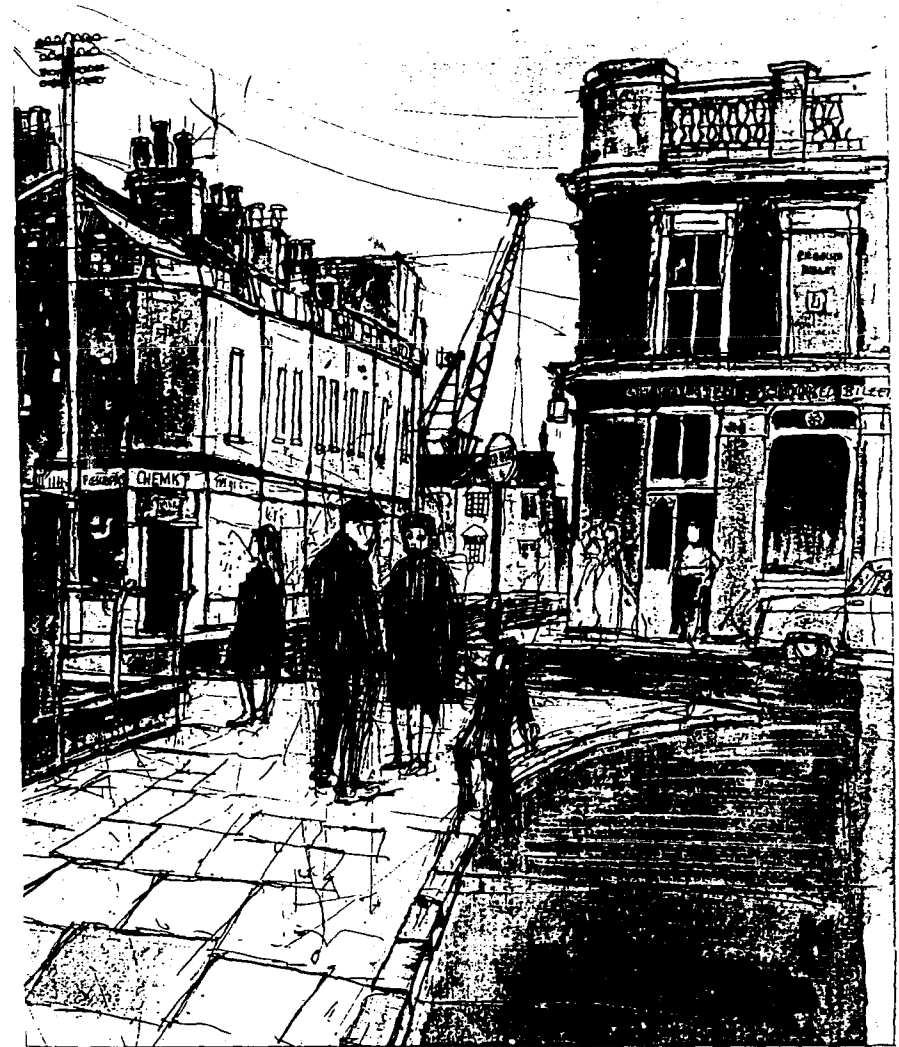
1989

- Sat 9 Sep Sylvia and Friends: walk in the footsteps of Sylvia Pankhurst and the East London Suffragettes, led by Rosemary Taylor Bow Road District Line Station 2 p.m.
- Wed 25 Oct Annual General Meeting followed by Members' Evening Queen Mary College 7.30 p.m.
- Wed 22 Nov Jews and the East End Hospital — Gerry Black Queen Mary College 7.30 p.m.
- Wed 6 Dec The origins of London — Charles Poulsen Queen Mary College 7.30 p.m.

1990

- Wed 24 Jan Growing up between the Wars — Robert Barltrop Queen Mary College 7.30 p.m.
- Wed 21 Feb Writing a local history: Stepney and the Victoria County History — Patricia Croot Queen Mary College 7.30 p.m.
- Wed 7 Mar From over the seas: Foreign sailors ashore in the Royal Docks — Howard Bloch Queen Mary College 7.30 p.m.
- Wed 4 Apr Free for All: Woolwich Ferry services since the Middle Ages — Julian Watson Queen Mary College 7.30 p.m.

*The East London History Society (founded 1952) exists to further interest in the history of East London, namely the London Boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Newham.*



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EAST LONDON  
RECORD

No. 12

1989

# EAST LONDON RECORD

## EAST LONDON RECORD

Editor: Colm Kerrigan

The East London History Society publishes the *East London Record* once a year. We welcome articles on any aspect of the history of the area that forms the London boroughs of Hackney, Tower Hamlets, and Newham. Articles should be sent to the editor at 38 Ridgale Street, Bow, London E3 2TW.

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Cover illustration: This shows a view of the 1960s looking south down King David Lane, Shadwell. The shop on the left (No. 1), was a pharmacy from soon after it was built in the 1840s and remained so until just before it was demolished in 1970. The 'Crooked Billet' public house on the right (No. 43) was built about 1852 on the site of an older pub of the same name. No. 3, King David Lane was the birthplace of the eminent scientist, Sir William Henry Perkin, who is the subject of the first article in this issue. Copyright for this picture, and for all the illustrations accompanying the article 'Discovery in the East End' is reserved with D. H. Leaback.

No. 12 1989

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## DISCOVERY IN THE EAST END

A personal account of discovery against a seemingly very ordinary East End background.

David Herbert Leaback

PROMINENT among my earliest memories are the visits we made before the war to my grandparents in the East End of London. Every second Sunday, after the mid-day meal, my father, my mother, my younger brother and I set out on the trek to my father's parents in Bromley by Bow. And trek it was, for while the distance involved was not much above four miles, we had to cross two areas of docklands and a Thames still busy with river traffic. Furthermore, my father was frequently out of work in those difficult years of the 1930s, so every mile we walked saved bus fares we could often ill afford.

Our route to Bow is still indelibly marked in my mind by 'interest milestones' put there by a mother anxious to distract, and to keep us going. For instance, near the canal bridge on the Old Kent Road, we listened for crickets in the otherwise silent sawmill and at Rotherhithe we looked for the flags and pennants on the ships in the Surrey Commercial Docks — as well as those on the Scandinavian Churches near the entrance to the Tunnel. Through the Tunnel we normally rode one of the rickety old solid-tyred buses that still plied the route. My father told me that they were like ones in which he had gone to France during the Great War, and that they had been kept on here, because the Tunnel's kerbs punished pneumatic tyres so badly. At Christmas, however, family arrangements somehow dictated that we set out for Bow after the bus services had finished — so then our walking included the tedious length of the Tunnel itself. I can still conjure up the peculiar sounds of the Tunnel of those Christmas days of long ago — when the occasional approaching vehicle produced a strangely musical whine, rising gradually to a crescendo, and then receding with the vehicle, to leave us with the ringing echoes of our own footsteps on the Tunnel's narrow sidewalk.

At the northern end of the Tunnel lay the drab Shadwell/Limehouse neighbourhood; where my mother finished her midwifery training when she first came to London. Here at the bus-stop, we sometimes watched men manoeuvring massive loads into barges, and I vividly remember pressing close to my mother as gruff seamen or dockers swung uncertainly by — singing loudly, and smelling heavily of drink.

Across Commercial Road the game was to complete the length of York (now Yorkshire) Road, before a train of the old Blackwall Extension Railway could clank and rumble by us — high on its dingy, brick arches. Then into Salmon Lane, we hurried between tall canal walls to a house with a deep, dark 'area' — for us to gaze down through iron railings into the 'area' decorated with seashells from some far-off shore. Occasionally my father bought shrimps 'for the Old Lady' from a stall in Rhodeswell Road, and he invariably pointed out the place where he was brought up and where a hoop of



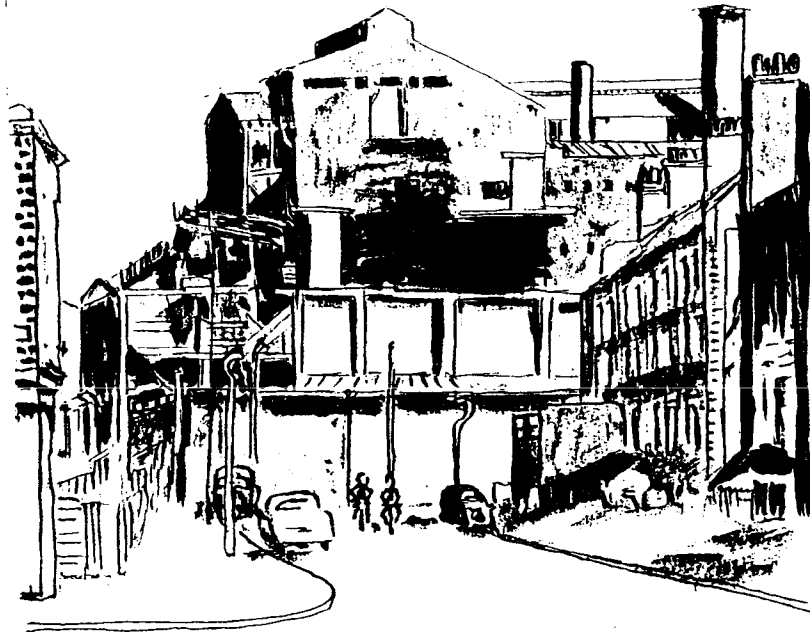
*A view of the 1960s looking N.W. (from point ① on the map), towards 165 Turners Road, Bromley, and the Robeson Street arch of the (early 1850s) Blackwall Extension Railway.*

his had once tangled the legs of a carthorse, with unpleasant consequences for all. The last of our 'interest milestones' was on the curve of St. Paul's Road, where my brother and I frequently hung back, searching among the litter for 'Games Gum' wrappers bearing coupons for free gifts — but we were often hurried on by the unpleasant smells from the nearby sewer vent-pipe, or by our parents anxious to reach our destination at the other end of Turners Road. ① \*

I never remember using the front door of the house my grandparents rented, but always entered by the side-door in Robeson Street. There, in the small back sitting room, my stocky, strong-willed grey-haired grandmother reigned supreme. She expected regular visits from all her six daughters and three surviving sons — or, at least, representatives of their families. Only at Christmas did all the family attempt to gather at the house to make merry in the hallowed front parlour, and to sing music hall songs, led by my towering Uncle Fred wielding top hat and cane in the style of George Robey.

At other times of the year, there was little to occupy my brother and myself at the grandparents. I remember sitting at the fireside with my grandfather, and after his (inevitable) enquiry concerning the progress of 'my studies', he would sometimes tell me of his music-making with a band in Tredegar Square, or of his work at the Co-op in Lemn Street. Now and again, he would get me foreign stamps for my collection, and once, he gave me

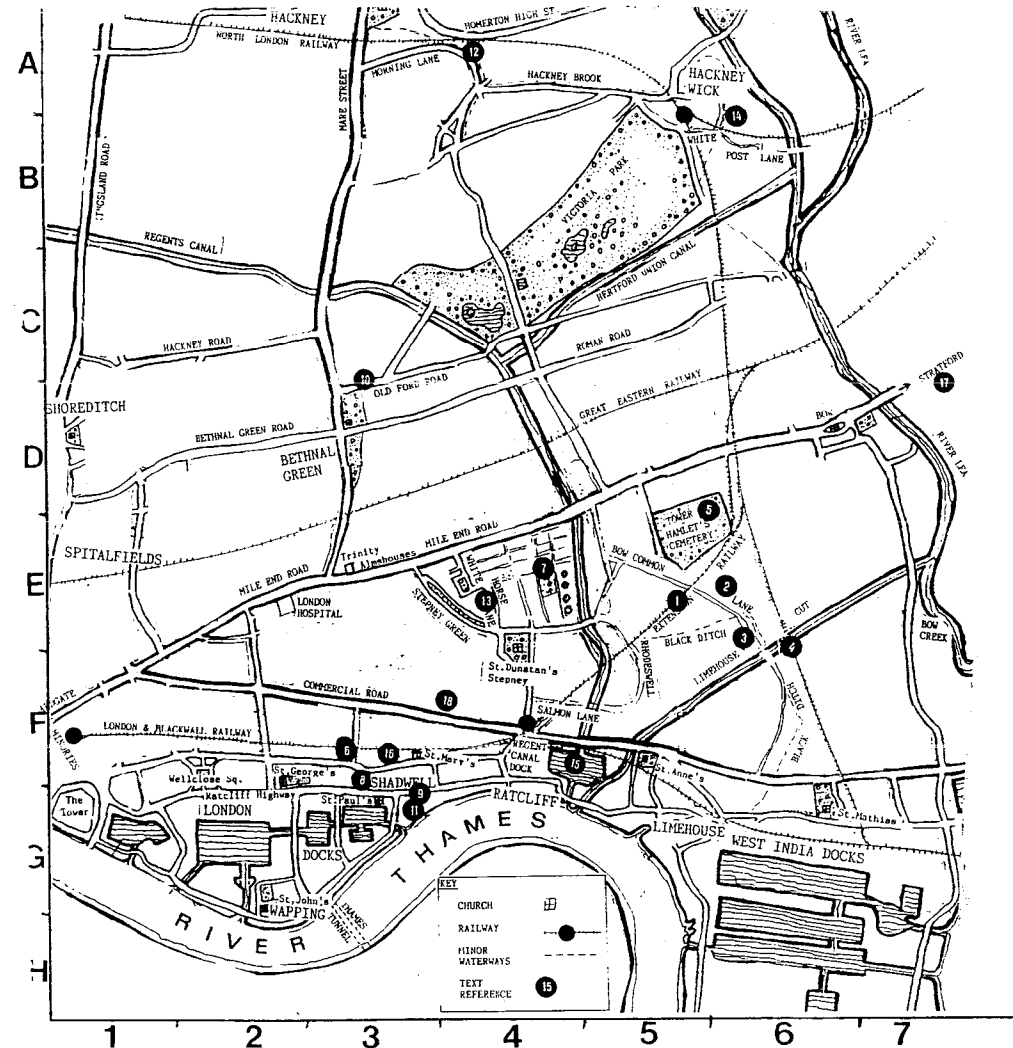
\* Numbers within circles indicate locations on the plan (page 5), while bracketed numbers refer to the NOTES at the end of the article.



View of the 1960s looking N.E. from point ① on the map, towards the gasworks in Bow Common Lane ②. The latter was part of the 'noxious trades' that established themselves on Bow and Bromley Commons during the 19th century. This gasworks was an important source of not only gas and coke, but also of coal tar for the nearby distilleries of John Bethell ③ and (later) Laurie, Blott & Co. ④.

a silkworm cocoon he had obtained somewhere in Bethnal Green. I also remember the day when I overheard him exchange a few words in German with my mother, and the shock it was, when I learned that his parents came originally from Germany. Shocked, because I had hitherto assumed our origins were wholly Anglo-Scottish, and because all things German were suspect in those uneasy years between the wars.

At the grandparents, my brother and I most usually played ball on the pavement outside or beneath the railway arch. And a smelly place it was to play — for we had to contend not only with the smells of the railway, but also those produced by the clanking, hissing edifice of the gasworks that loomed above us in nearby Bow Common Lane. ② My mother told me that the smells were worse further down towards the Limehouse Cut, and that she knew of mothers who believed that the chemical vapours near 'Stink House Bridge' ③ ④ were considered beneficial for their children with 'the croup'. My Uncle Fred confirmed this story, for he had originally set up home in nearby Thomas Road, and had later been glad to move to the clearer air further up Bow Common Lane — to a house strangely suffering from subsidence. Every time I visited, I had to see whether the slope of his bedroom floor was increasing, and to inspect the legs of the bed which he had had to saw to get a level sleep. It was in this unusual house where my grandparents stayed when their home was blasted by a German bomb, early in the 1939 War.



Outline map showing features and locations relevant to the main theme of this article — the development of the chemical industry in the East End — that is, down wind and down river of the 'City'. These tended to establish themselves around waterways like Hackney Brook (A5 – A6 – C7), the Black Ditch (E5 – E6 – F6 – G5), or the Limehouse Cut (F5 – G7). However, increasing pollution towards mid 19th century, provoked restrictive regulation within the boundaries of Metropolitan Board of Works jurisdiction (roughly, A5 – D6 – G7 – on the map). Thereafter, such enterprises tended to establish close to, or outside, the boundaries, e.g. Hackney Wick ⑬ or Stratford ⑰.

The war dispersed everyone so much, that there were no further meetings of the family at Bow. I carried on with 'my studies', and not only qualified in chemistry, but learned how to research in the experimental sciences. From time to time, I puzzled over the lack of knowledge within the family, as to their own origins. Was it a lack of interest, or an inability to find out?

At odd times, between other activities, I began to discover how to locate the birth, death or marriage certificates that can lead to such records as wills or census returns — and thus be able to verify the facts and circumstances relating to people living in Britain during the last hundred years or so. Supplemented by snippets of information from various relatives, gradually a fuller account of the family's origins began to take shape.

It seems that sometime before 1860, Frederick and Katherine Lubecke came from the troubled Hanover region, to find shelter near the Lutheran Church in Whitechapel. Through the documents, I followed the births of my grandfather and his brothers and sisters, together with their removals to various addresses in that very poor area, just south of Commercial Road. Like many other German immigrants, my great grandfather had found employment in the sugar bakeries that were a dreadful feature of the area. It was said that the working conditions in these bakeries were so bad that even the poorest Irish immigrants would not work there. (1) I discovered that it was in such a place that my great grandfather met with a fatal accident (2) and was later buried in Tower Hamlets Cemetery. © In spite of extensive searchings in the archives and in the wilderness of that neglected cemetery, I never did discover his gravestone. I concluded that the bereaved family had probably been too hard up to afford a headstone.

At this time the family were living in Lower Cornwall Street, St. George-in-the-East, one of the poorest parishes in this poorest part of London. © It was from this address that my grandfather left to marry one Sophia Herbert, who lived with her family just off Shandy Street, White Horse Lane, Mile End Old Town. © My mother remembered something of Shandy Street from her early district nursing, but could only recall that in the 1920s it was a street of very poor, overcrowded terraces.

All this family history was eagerly awaited by my father — and he equally eagerly, passed it on to his brothers and sisters. I concluded that it was not for the want of interest that there had been no previous version of the family's history. I also concluded that to take things much further, written family records were essential — and they were conspicuously absent. Still, I had enjoyed learning how to research in this, to me, new area of enquiry. In fact, I had found some remarkable parallels with the laboratory research with which I was more familiar. For instance, in both areas there is the need for hard work to accumulate sufficient data relevant to a particular problem — and if a chance discovery is made, it is important to recognise its potentials, and pursue it with energy, imagination and appropriate methods of further investigation.



*A view of 3 King David Lane, Shadwell (and two of the author's sons). It had been a butchers shop for many years and was demolished shortly after this photograph was taken.*

In addition to this experience of a new area of research, I had also accumulated a deal of source material on the East End. It was while browsing through some such material (3) that I chanced upon the following brief statement, 'Shadwell was the birthplace of Sir William Perkin, the chemist who discovered aniline dyes'. Here was something special relating to that poorest part of London, I had come to know for family reasons. I could remember something of W. H. Perkin from much earlier lectures on organic chemistry. But now I sought out, with added interest, published accounts of Perkin's discovery. I found, to my surprise, that the story of his discovery had been told at least 50 times. A representative example is the following:

During his Easter vacation in 1856, a lad only seventeen years of age set himself the task of trying to prepare quinine artificially. His name was William Henry Perkin; and the problem which he faced still remains unsolved, but his experiments led to the discovery of the first aniline dye, and from it has arisen a great industry. In the course of his attempts to make quinine, Perkin obtained a black mass, which would have been left by most students as the final result of the inquiry. But Perkin had the true scientific spirit, and proceeded to investigate this uninviting substance. He obtained from it finally the violet dye known as mauvine or aniline purple. Aniline, from which this dye was derived, is one of the substances found in the tar obtained during the manufacture of coal-gas. In the early days of gas-making, coal-tar was regarded as a waste product of no use to anyone, and often a great nuisance to the manufacturer. (4)

Other versions told of how his father had hoped that William might train as an architect, and so perhaps participate in the family building business — but a schoolfriend had shown his son some simple chemical experimentation, and thereafter, William would contemplate nothing other than to study chemistry. He persuaded his father to allow him to leave his local place of schooling and to proceed to the City of London School — which had an exceptional master, Thomas Hall, to teach chemistry. Hall had himself been educated at the Royal College of Chemistry in Oxford Street, under the gifted German teacher and researcher — Professor A. W. Hofmann. Tommy Hall soon recognised William Perkin's talent and enthusiasm for chemistry, and later helped William to persuade his father to let him attend the College. So was it at the College that Perkin actually made his great discovery? One publication:

Dr. W. H. Perkin was in Hofmann's laboratory in 1856, and endeavouring to produce quinine by synthesis — that is, by uniting substances together to form a compound — when he chanced upon the brilliant colour now spoken of as mauve.  
(5)

seems to suggest that it was indeed, in Hofmann's laboratory — and others indicate that Perkin made the discovery using compounds developed there. Perkin himself stated that it was in his home laboratory (6) — but where was that?

In the majority of published accounts, no reference is made as to where the Perkins lived. In a few, Shadwell or the East End are mentioned — and in an exceptional one of these, a small photograph of a shop is shown carrying the legend 'Perkin's birthplace — 3 King David Lane, Shadwell — today'.

On the next available occasion, a family trip across London, I took the opportunity to visit the site. I found, to my horror, that 3 King David Lane was about to be demolished. I hastily photographed the doomed shop.

Again I resorted to East End source material, and found an entry in the 1841 Shadwell census return showing that there was, indeed, a household in King David Lane headed by a George Perkin — a carpenter of 35 years. Also in the house that night of 6th June, 1841 were his wife (Sarah, aged 35), three sons (George, Thomas and William, aged 14, 8 and 3), three daughters (Sarah, Selina and Louisa, aged 12, 7 and 5), together with two others (Peter Cuthbert and Mary Lissett, aged 73 and 40) — who turned out to be Sarah Perkin's father and sister. Furthermore, street directories from 1838 onwards listed 'George Fowler Perkin, carpenter, 3 King David Lane, Shadwell' alongside others, like that of Charles H. Clifford — the publican of the 'Crooked Billet' at 20 King David Lane.

Since William Perkin was born in 1838, this seemed good evidence that his birthplace was indeed, at No. 3 of that narrow 'lane' of tradesmen, shopkeepers and the old Shadwell Police Office. But I was puzzled by certain entries in the directories. These seemed to indicate that from 1848 onwards George Perkin shared premises with a pork butcher! Closer inspection showed that all the tradesmen at Nos. 1 to 9, King David Lane shared addresses with others — including the newly-arrived pharmacist at No. 1 apparently sharing premises with a builder. This puzzle was made clear by the

lucky discovery of a plan (9) showing that the houses originally stood only on the west side of King David Lane ⑥, and were numbered sequentially in a terrace running northwards towards the 'Crooked Billet' at No. 20 (see Front Cover). Evidently therefore, William Perkin's actual birthplace must have been an old house that once stood near the S.W. corner of King David Lane with the Ratcliff Highway. After 1851, directory entries for George Perkin's business appeared under somewhere called 'King David Fort'. I found that name on maps from the 17th century and it seems to have been the name of a defensive earthwork dating from the Civil War, (10). On later maps, some buildings appear on the site of the fort — clustered around a rope manufactory in the adjacent parish of St. George-in-the-East.

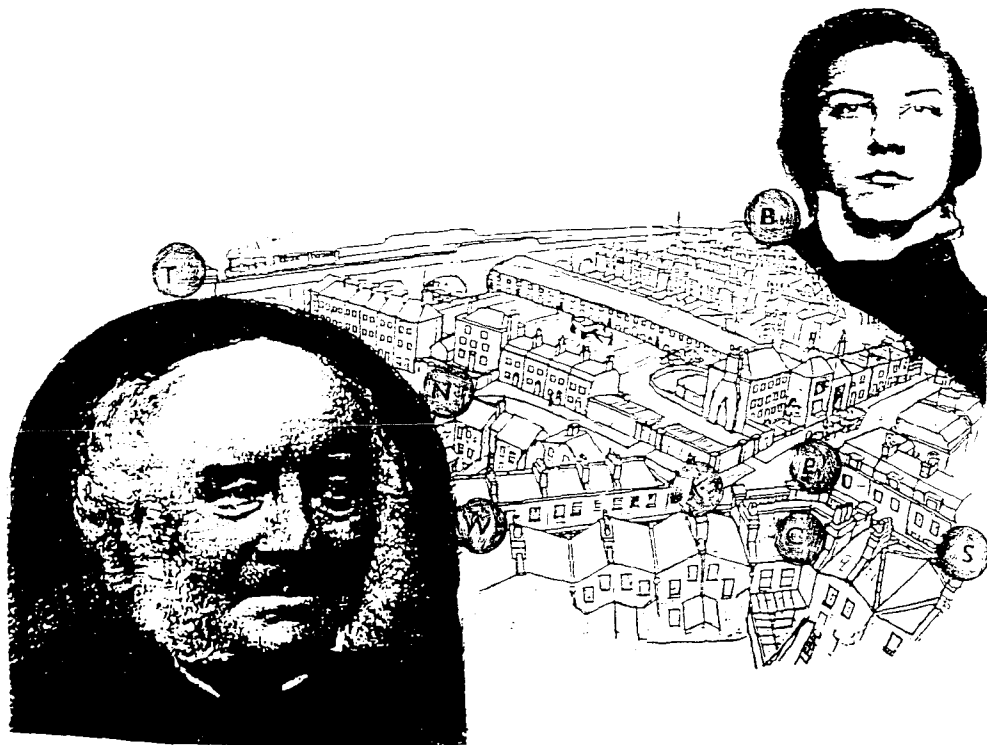
The 1851 census returns for that parish found the Perkin family at home at 1 King David Fort (11), and hard searching through many dusty archives unearthed two original deeds (12, 13) which gave not only the dimensions of the property, but also the precise location of the house of interest. It also appeared from the deeds, that George Perkin leased the property on Christmas Day, 1850, for 28 years at £30 per annum.

Good progress, for it was now clear that this must have been where Perkin had his laboratory when he made his discovery in 1856. But what did the house look like before it was demolished around 1937? Since I could locate no photographs of the property, I advertised for anyone who had known the house at what was later, 107 Sutton Street. (14) I received three replies — Mr. G. Bell, who had worked in the house when it was associated with nearby Frost's Ropeworks; Mrs. A. Hays, who was brought up next door, and Mrs. L. Upcraft, who had actually lived in the house. When I told them the story of Perkin's discovery, they were much surprised that anything so special had happened in that drab old house they had once known. Discussions followed — centering partly on some rough sketches and on a cardboard model I had constructed. With their help I gradually arrived at a reconstruction of how King David Fort must have appeared when George Perkin moved his family there.

The move must have been welcomed, since the Perkin family was growing up, and the family business needed more space. It had grown from a carpentering concern to an enterprise employing 12 men, (11), largely involved in building terraces for the many who were crowding into the East End in search of work and shelter. (15) So, where in the house was the discovery made? Perkin himself wrote:

My own first private laboratory was half of a small but long-shaped room with a few shelves for bottles and a table. In the fireplace a furnace was also built. No water laid on or gas. I used to work with old Berzelius spirit lamps and in a shed I did combustions with charcoal. It was in this laboratory I worked in the evenings and vacation times and here I discovered and worked out my experiments on the mauve. (16)

Further discussions with Mrs. Upcraft led to the conclusion that it must have been in a room at the top of the house, where William Perkin had carried out his experiments, at first with photography, then with chemicals, and later, with the dyeing of fabrics using the new mauve colour. The latter



*Reconstructed view of King David Fort (KN) as it would have appeared about 1856. Other features include, Back Lane leading westwards (KW), Sun Tavern Fields leading eastwards (KE), and King David Lane leading southwards (KS). On the corners of the latter were a pharmacy (P;No.1) and the 'Crooked Billet' Public House (P;No.43). Lower Cornwall St. (not shown) led westwards from the front of house N and the latter backed onto the yard of Frost's Ropeworks (RR'). At T was the old Shadwell Station of the Blackwall Railway (BT). At the end of 1850, George Fowler Perkin (left insert) moved his family from 3 King David Lane to the house N, at 1 King David Fort. His son, William (right insert) used a room at the top of this house as a simple laboratory – and it was there, during the Easter holiday of 1856, that he discovered the first significant synthetic dye. Later that year William and his brother Thomas made larger quantities of the dye and its intermediates in the small back garden of the house (N).*

experiments were performed in conjunction with silk dyers introduced by a (previously unidentified (17)) Dr. Carson. Prolonged investigations have indicated (18) that it was Dr. Alexander Carson, M.R.S., of 121 Cock Hill, Ratcliff ☉ who was instrumental in Perkin's introduction to the dyers Pullars of Perth, Scotland, and to Keith & Co., of Bethnal Green. Again my East End source material permitted the precise location of Thomas Keith's silk-dyeing premises at 9 North Side, Bethnal Green ☉, but since the premises had long been demolished and no satisfactory photographs seem to have been taken, it was necessary to find someone who knew the building. Then serendipity took a hand; a relative of my wife's once worked in the Town Hall nearby, and could recall the building when it was used during the War for an Air Raid Precautions Centre.



*View looking east, taken during the 1960s, of Cock Hill, Ratcliff. ☉. In the distance is the 'East India Arms' public house, and, on the left, the house where Dr. Alexander Carson had his practice during the 1850s. In 1856, this Dr. Carson introduced William Perkin to silk dyers for trials of the newly-discovered mauve dye.*

It was then possible to picture the important interactions that took place there during the last months of 1856. The youthful William Perkin would have brought samples of the new dye for trials, and would have been received by the experienced, forty-year old, Thomas Keith in his elegant Georgian, three-storied house. After showing William over the dyeing sheds at the rear of the house, they would have discussed the prospects for the new dye. The verdict was, that provided the dye could be produced in sufficient quantities, and did not cost too much, there should be a market for the new colour.

This period was one of great uncertainty for Perkin. He had not returned to research at the College but, with the help of his brother Thomas, made larger quantities of the dye in the small back garden at King David Fort.

I also worked for a few weeks in a laboratory of my friend Mr. Duppa fitted up in the back apartment of his house at Hollinbourne House in Kent. Here the appliances were very small indeed but we discovered bromoacetic acid there from which we obtained the artificial formation of glycolic acid a very important discovery and glycolic acid. (16)

He was now contemplating somewhere to manufacture commercial quantities of the dyestuff. In a letter addressed to him (19) dated 14th May 1857, Perkin read:

I am really sorry, however, to hear that you have as yet been baffled in all your attempts to secure a piece of ground for carrying your scientific ideas into practice on a large scale. I sincerely hope you may ere long meet with a suitable place and on reasonable terms, but I fear you will have to seek for it as you indicate, near Manchester or Glasgow, or some such place where a chemical works is not such a bug-bear as it appears to be to the benighted inhabitants in the vicinity of the metropolis.

It is clear that the Perkins were experiencing great difficulties in locating a suitable site to manufacture the mauve dye. This is odd because, even a cursory consultation of contemporary East End directories and maps, reveals particular concentrations of chemical manufacturers in places like Stratford, Hackney Wick and Bow and Bromley Commons, with noticeable clustering around waterways like the River Lea, Hackney Brook, The Black Ditch and the Limehouse Cut. Moreover, it is extremely likely that the Perkins would have close knowledge of at least some of these. For instance, George Perkin was born and brought up near Shadwell Market ① — where the Berger brothers had started their pigment and paint enterprise before removing to Homerton ②, (18); and the Spill brothers had started their chemical waterproofing concern in St. George-in-the-East before acquiring new sites at White Horse Lane ③ and Hackney Wick. ④, (18) We also know for certain (6) that William Perkin, had already obtained samples of coal tar chemicals from John Bethell's Distillery on Bow Common Lane. ⑤

Further hard searching of East End newspapers showed that local Officers of Health were uncertainly interpreting the recent Nuisance Removal Act (20), and were paying increasing attention to trades that might produce noxious vapours. I found examples of the Poplar Board of Works (21) forcing the removal of a new building, and objecting to enterprises in York Road and Bow Common Lane.

To avoid objections, the obvious solution was to look for a suitable site outside the boundaries of the London Metropolis. John Pullar had advised looking as far afield as Manchester or Glasgow — but, not long after receiving Pullar's letter, the Perkins heard of a likely site at Greenford Green, near Harrow, Middlesex. The one-acre field involved was pleasantly rural (22) and, not only offered plentiful local labour, but also good communications — from the canal adjacent to the site, back to the docks at Limehouse ⑥ and from nearby Harrow back to Shadwell Station on the Blackwall Railway. ⑦ The sale of the site was agreed very rapidly (23), and building started immediately.

Within six months, commercial quantities of the new mauve dye were produced from the few hastily-erected buildings on the site. A craze for mauve developed in women's fashions, and the immediate success of the enterprise was assured. Thomas Perkin had very ably taken on the building, the management, and the commercial aspects of the enterprise — and the Perkin



*A reconstructed view looking N.W. of Shandy Street, Mile End Old Town, ① as it was remembered by Mr. Thomas Stout's recollections of the 1930s. To the left is the 'Alfred's Head' public house; on the corner of Duckett Street, and facing is the former Alfred Terrace. The second house from the right was where the Lissett family lived from the 1830s to about 1860. William married Jemima Lissett, his cousin, from here in September 1859.*

sisters kept house for the men at the cottage they rented in the village of Greenford Green. (24). William himself had had many technical problems to solve — but he must also have seen much of his cousin, Jemima Lissett — because, soon after they were 21, they married, and set up home two miles away at Sudbury, Middlesex. (25) Within three years, Jemima Perkin had given birth to two sons — both of whom were later to become eminent professors of chemistry. Tragically, Jemima died of tuberculosis soon after the birth of her second son.

Since almost nothing is known of Jemima's short life, I decided to find out a little more. I found that she had spent the majority of her years in a tiny, terraced house in a narrow street ⑧ that branched off the ancient thoroughfare of White Horse Lane, Mile End. It emerged that the former Lissett home had long been pulled down — so I advertised again for help. (26) I was fortunate to contact Mr. Tommy Stout — who had known that (Shandy) street all his life, and had been brought up in the very terrace of interest. From what we discussed, it became possible to reconstruct how the terrace had appeared during Mr. Stout's youth. This, in turn, made it possible to imagine the scene there on Tuesday, 13th September 1859. That is, the scene at 9 Alfred Terrace when Jemima Lissett — her mother in attendance — was making the last minute preparations for her marriage. When the wedding carriage arrived, a crowd of neighbours and street children would have gathered to catch a glimpse of Jemima in her voluminous marriage finery — before she was

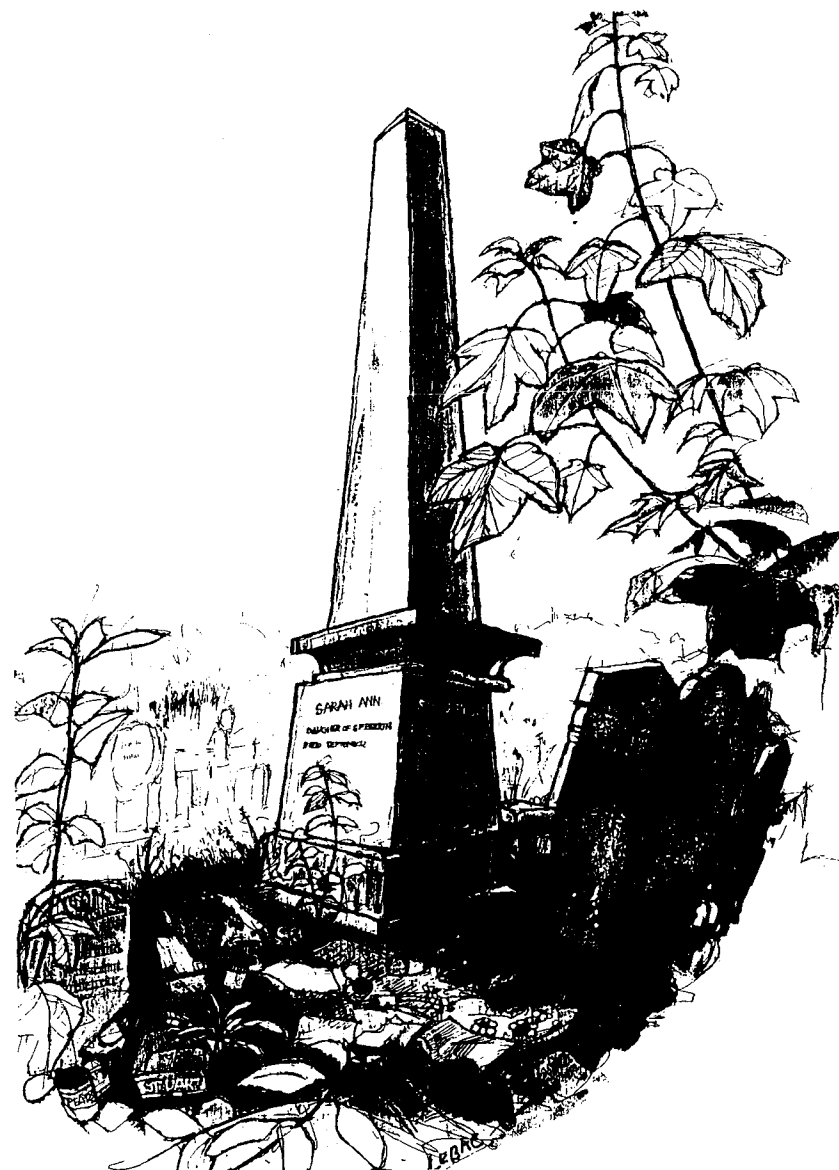




*The house at 517 Commercial Road ① where George Derby ran his Arbour Terrace School during the 1850s. It was here that William Perkin received his early education and is one of the few surviving buildings associated with his life. It is now occupied by Mr. & Mrs. 'Tich' Forrest.*

whisked away to St. Mary's, Johnson Street. There she was awaited by the well-known Revd. W. McCall, the assembled friends and relations and, especially, her handsome, highly-accomplished, young bridegroom — William Perkin. This church where they were married ② is one of the few surviving buildings anywhere (27) that have strong associations with Perkin.

Of course, there is still St. Paul's Shadwell, where William and his father were baptised — and I did discover a miraculously-surviving building in Commercial Road ③, where William had received his early education. Which amount to very little left, to mark the life and achievements of a world-recognised East Ender. Moreover, I found little or no local awareness of Perkin's past presence in the East End. This may partly be due to the considerable time since the Perkins lived in the East End, or perhaps to the ever-changing cultural origins of those who come to live there. What I am sure



*The family grave of George Fowler Perkin in Tower Hamlets Cemetery. ④ Also buried there were his wife, Sara; his daughter, Sarah Ann; his son, George Frederick, and his nephew, Thomas Henry Perkin. The latter three all died young of tuberculosis. The Perkin monument was damaged by a bomb during the 1939 war, and is badly neglected in a wilderness of trees, undergrowth and dumped rubbish.*

of, however, is that I was only just about in time to talk to local people who once knew long-demolished buildings that were of significance in the story of William Perkin's great discovery. I was also struck by how often the tracks of my own early family crossed those of the Perkins. This is probably only a reflection of the fact that we could all relate to everyone provided we were to dig deeply enough into the past. My hope is that this account of my own digging into the past has demonstrated that it is still possible to make significant discoveries against the seemingly unpromising background of London's East End.

#### Acknowledgements

I am indebted to my brother Stuart and to Derek Sayers for skilled assistance with the drawings and photographs, respectively; to the staff of Tower Hamlets' Local History Library, and that of the Royal Society of Chemistry, for continued help; to Mr. & Mrs. W. R. Kirkpatrick, and the late Mr. A. H. Waters, for access to Perkin family papers; to the East Enders mentioned in the text, for help with local information; to my mother and late father for a lifetime's love and care, and to my own immediate family for 'living with Perkin' for so long.

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## THE STORY OF THE OLD FIVE BELLS

Rosemary Taylor

THE Old Five Bells was a Public House which once stood in St. Leonards Street, Bromley by Bow, in the Borough of Poplar, very near to Limehouse Cut. No trace of the original building or its site remains, since most of St. Leonards Street disappeared in the making of the Northern Approach to the Blackwall Tunnel and the Bow Flyover.

What makes the history of the Pub unique is that in its time it played host to both the Almighty and the Demon Drink, without changing its outward character.

No. 152 St. Leonards Street had been the site of a country Inn or Tavern from the 16th Century. According to the Revd. Adams, who purchased the premises in 1923, 'There is an old model (of the Inn) still existing. It was a double-fronted, one storied building, with a porch between the bay windows on the ground floor, and above the porch the date 1523.

In 1882 there is a record of the building having been pulled down and re-erected. The new building, on a corner site, had three floors and was a fairly large Pub. The ground floor contained a Saloon Bar, Jug and Bottle compartment, a Private Bar, and behind the counter, the Bar Parlour. Upstairs was a large billiard room, a small club room and a store room. The second floor consisted of four good sized rooms. The kitchen stood on a landing between the ground floor and the billiard room. This building was run as a Public House from 1882 until its licence lapsed in 1922, when it was put up for sale.

It was about this time that the Minister of the Baptist Church at Berger Mission Hall, the Revd. A. Gilbert Adams, was in search of suitable premises for a recreation room. He had been approached on several occasions by members of his congregation, men out of work with nowhere to go, for permission to use the facilities at the Medical Hall. This was a training centre and headquarters for the Regions Beyond Missionary Union, who also ran Harley College. The men were apparently reluctant to spend their time in the local pubs and were not welcome at home during the daytime. Although permission was given, it soon proved so popular, that a permanent 'club' premises had to be found. The Revd. Adams saw the Old Five Bells and decided it would be an ideal place for his men and women. The premises were purchased in 1924 with, according to Revd. Adams, the enthusiastic support of Mr. E. Alexander of St. Mary Axe, who contributed the money for the deposit. The balance of the money was obtained from various Temperance Societies, which helped to pay not only for the purchase, but also for the renovation and refurbishment of the rooms.

The Revd. and Mrs. Adams had decided that the character of the Pub would remain unaltered, and instead of beer and spirits it would sell tea, coffee and Bovril. The idea of a 'dry' Pub caught the imagination of the

public, and several newspapers, both in England and abroad, carried articles and pictures of the Pub.

On the 24th September 1924, the Old Five Bells was opened by Miss Ishbel Macdonald, daughter of the Prime Minister. The Opening Ceremony was attended by the Mayor of Poplar, Councillors and leading members of Temperance Societies. It was emphasised at the opening that the Old Five Bells would retain the atmosphere of a Pub, but without intoxicating liquors. All men and women over eighteen years of age could remain in the Bars from 11.00 a.m. until 10.00 p.m. without purchasing anything, unless they wished to do so. Mrs. Adams would manage the Bar, with the aid of voluntary helpers.

The Old Five Bells by all accounts became a refuge for men out of work and for factory girls in search of a place to eat their fish and chips, during their lunch hour. Newspapers were available for those who wished to read, and there was a full sized billiard table in the upstairs room.

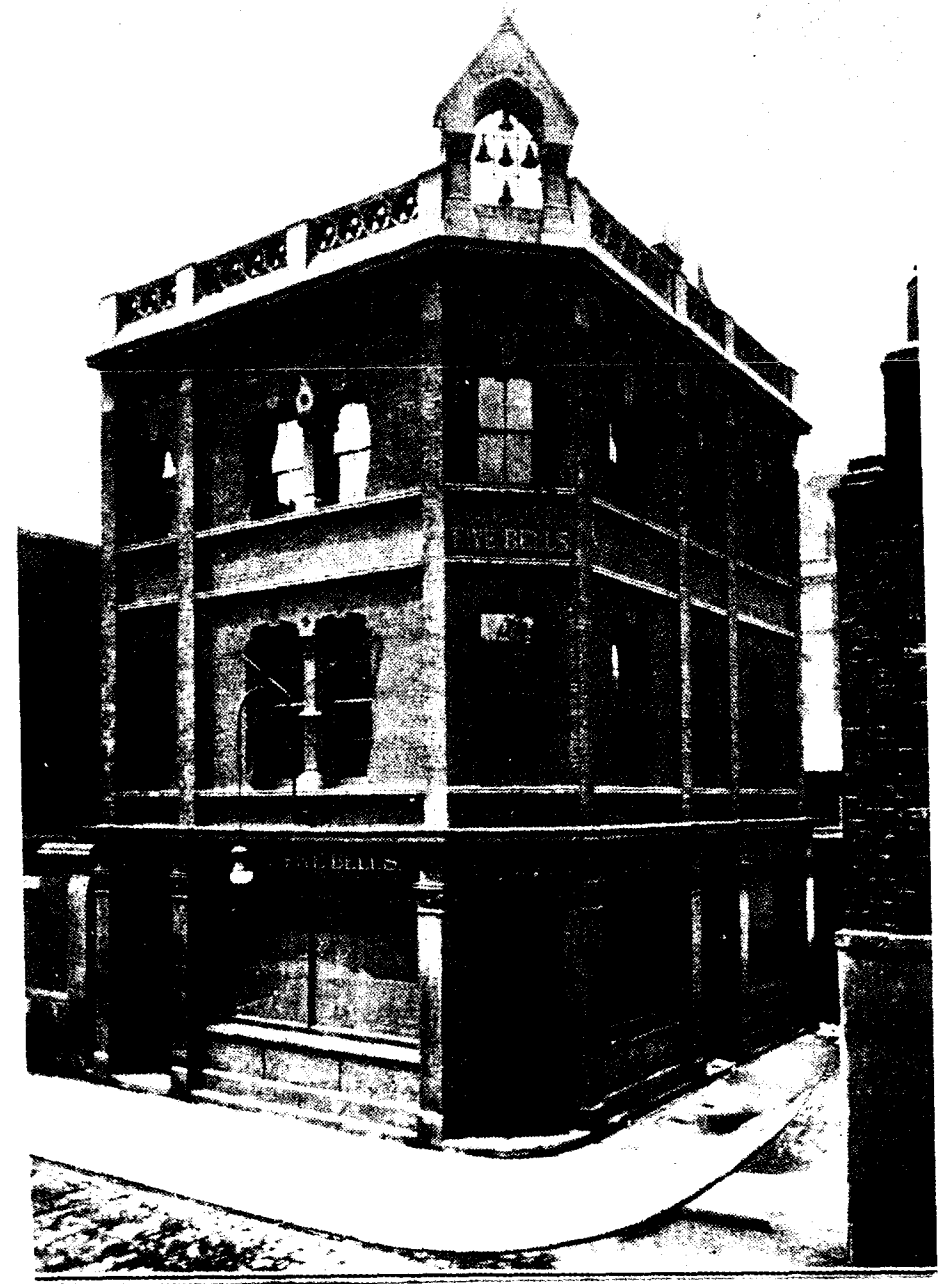
The Director of the Pub was always at pains to stress that the intention was not to make a financial profit, and it would appear it never did. The purpose of the scheme was to help draw the local men and women, especially those out of work, away from the temptations of drink and gambling, and in some small measure, to improve the quality of their lives. To prove his point he quotes one of his parishioners as saying, 'Our 'ome's another place since my chap started goin' to 'The Bells' of a night. He brings 'is money in reg'lar, and I ain't 'ad a black eye this twelve month'.

Apart from hot drinks, the Pub sold rolls and sandwiches, as well as cigarettes and chocolates. It was run entirely through voluntary help, and remained in constant use as a 'dry' Pub from 1924 right up to the Second World War. It was not only used as a club, but also as an advice and 'Job Centre', with Revd. Adams writing letters of introduction, and providing adequate clothing for job seekers. The only concession to religion were the Sunday afternoon Bible Classes, which were attended by about fifty members.

In 1933, when the Regions Beyond Missionary Union decided to concentrate its work overseas, Berger Hall and the Old Five Bells passed into the ownership of the Shaftesbury Society. The Baptist Union now leased the premises of Berger Hall and the Pub for a peppercorn rent, and the good work continued.

On the first Saturday of September 1940, Berger Hall on Empson Street went up in flames, one week after the arrival of a new Minister, the Revd. Stuart Thompson. He moved his flock into the nearby St. Andrew's Church, which unfortunately, suffered the same fate. This was too much for the Reverend, who accepted a call to Brighton, leaving his much depleted flock with neither shepherd nor fold. Led by Sister Elsie Chapple and Mr. Alfred Rogers, the congregation moved into the Old Five Bells, with the reluctant blessings of the Shaftesbury Society.

In March 1941, the Poplar and Bromley Tabernacle, the other Baptist church situated in Zetland Street, and known locally as the 'Tab', was destroyed in a bombing raid. They too, had been without a Minister, the



*The Old Five Bells in 1923.*

Revd. Tildsley having retired at the start of the War to Southend. The Tab was run by Sister Esther, a Deaconess of remarkable courage and ability. Mabel Esther Thynne started her work at the Tab in 1910, and during the First World War became a local heroine when she regularly led groups of women and children into the shelter of the Blackwall tunnel during bombing raids.

Sister Esther removed her little congregation into a factory canteen nearby, and organised church services, and weekly women's meetings there until the end of the War. In 1946, through the efforts of Sister Esther, the two churches merged, becoming the Poplar and Berger Baptist Tabernacle, setting up home in the Old Five Bells. The Shaftesbury Society withdrew their payments towards Sister Elsie's salary at this time and she departed. Services were now conducted regularly by Sister Esther and her co-workers, including the faithful Alfred Rogers, until 1948, when she was removed to hospital with a fractured femur, from which she never recovered.

On the first Sunday of September 1948, the Revd. Lionel Jupp took over the ministry of the new Baptist Tabernacle. On Monday 14th November 1949 Sister Esther died, and her funeral service was conducted at 152 St. Leonards Street, in the Old Five Bells, on Friday 18th November. In her funeral address the Minister said: 'The Acts of the Apostles states proudly, "The Church that is in thy House." . . . we shall read of 'the Church that is in the old Public House.' The Old Five Bells was used as the church until the new building was erected in 1951 at its present premises on Zetland Street, with the hall being added in 1958.

Shortly afterwards, the construction of the new motorway commenced, and the Old Five Bells was demolished along with all the other buildings in the vicinity. The present Gillender Street end of the Northern Approach, near Limehouse Cut, is the nearest approximation of the site.

**NOTE:**

I am greatly indebted to Mr. Henry Dixon, the present Minister of the Poplar and Berger Tabernacle, and to Mr. Mark Diamond, for many years Treasurer of the Tab. Both gentlemen very generously handed over their entire collection of memorabilia, which were all that remained of the records that were salvaged from the bombed Tabernacle.

## A BETHNAL GREEN CHILDHOOD

Sam Vincent

I WAS born at 4 Alma Road, Bethnal Green, on 1st January 1928. The house was typical of those in the East End: a terraced type, with the front door opening on to the street. The houses that had a rear entry were those situated at each end of the terrace. For the rest, everything had to be brought in by way of the front door, including the coal. The house had four rooms, and scullery. We had no bathroom and the 'lav' was situated in the backyard. Going outside on cold nights was not something we looked forward to.

The rooms were lit by gas, using very fragile mantles bought from the local corner shop. We hated being sent to get a new one, as woe betide the person who broke it before getting it home. We used coal and firewood on the open fire. We got the firewood from Mr. and Mrs. Beasley. She was a big strong woman. Her husband got the firewood from a local furniture factory called Joseph's, whose yard he kept clear by removing the offcuts. Sometimes we would try to sneak off with a few sticks from Joseph's yard on the way home from school, but usually we bought it from Flo Beasley — one penny for as much as you could carry.

Our family consisted of Mum and Dad, my two older sisters and Gran, (Mum's mother). Conditions were very cramped indeed. My parents slept downstairs in the front room, as I did until my Gran died in 1939. Having no bathroom, my weekly bath was taken in an old zinc tub placed in front of the fire in the back room. I well remember being rubbed down quite rigorously by Mum with a nice warm towel. The older members of the family went to York Hall public baths, situated in Old Ford Road. There were also facilities there for doing the family wash in huge machines made by a company by the name of J. J. Lane, whose premises, incidentally, were just around the corner from our house. When Mum did the washing at home she lit the wash boiler in the scullery which used to belch out columns of smoke all round the backyard. She always used 'Reckitts Blue' in the zinc tub for the white washing. I often wondered how something blue could make the clothes white. The mangle was in the backyard and I loved to turn the huge hand-wheel. Mum always warned me to keep my fingers away from the wooden rollers for fear of a painful nip.

My father was always in full employment so we were adequately fed and clothed. He was an iron porter at Buck and Hickman in Whitechapel Road. The work was hard physically but being a strong man he coped easily. During the short holiday breaks such as Easter he would take me to the works to feed the cat with meat that he bought from a shop in Bonner Street.

The backroom of our house looked out into the backyard on to the back of a house in Cranbrook Street. The yards were separated by a double-sided wooden fence, the top edge of which was patrolled by neighbouring tom-cats. We used to have a she-cat named, strangely, Timmy. When we let her out she would walk along the back fence. I was always looking out for her

return and would be first to the back door to let her in again. She had many litters. We loved the kittens but unfortunately, most of them had to be put down, despite our pleas.

Our cousins in Mace Street were less fortunate than us. Uncle Maurice was more out of work than in. Aunt Maud couldn't always feed six mouths and the children often went hungry. Often a knock on the door would announce frail faces asking for some bread and jam. Mum would usher them in and give them what they wanted. Never having gone hungry myself I found it difficult to come to terms with the fact that they did and we did not. My political reasoning in late life stemmed from my experience of seeing what this kind of deprivation could do to people.

Bethnal Green had a large Jewish community at the time and the terror brought to them by the Blackshirts is well known. I remember one Sunday evening a Jewish street trader, who sold sea-food and pickled gherkins (wallies to us East Enders) in huge glass jars, had his entire stock smashed in the road, his hands covered in blood trying to clear away the mess. Bethnal Green was a tough neighbourhood and one had to be tough to survive.

An ice-cream seller used to come round the street in a cart pulled by a weary-looking donkey. The ice-cream was sold in small cube-shaped portions in paper. Not much thought of hygiene there, or with the seller of bagels (Jewish bread rolls) who used to call out 'Five for tuppence'. Ties were sold from a suitcase by a Sikh, a rare sight in those days. Prince Monolulu was another colourful character, who used to come around with his horse racing tips and his famous cry of 'I gotta horse'.

Kings, our local sweet shop, was situated at the corner of Cranbrook Street and Sydney Street. Apart from selling sweets, cigarettes and a host of other things, there was a 'ball dip' in the shop. This was a large canvas bag kept on the counter which contained wooden balls, about an inch in diameter. Each had a value painted on from a halfpenny to two shillings. There must have been an awful lot of halfpenny balls in the bag, for, often as I had a go, I never managed to pull out anything greater than what I paid for. A halfpenny, though, would buy about five toffees wrapped in paper.

The 'coffee shop' in Old Ford Road would be called a cafe today. It was known as 'a good pull-in for carmen'. Horse-drawn transport was still used a lot, and while the carmen were having their break the horses would have their nose-bags full of oats attached to the bridle. The shop next to the coffee shop was Ashleys, a small grocery business which used to sell 'loose jam' from a huge jar. We had to take our own containers, which Mr Ashley placed on some scales, carefully weighed and then added the jam. The bread shop with its lovely smell of newly-baked bread (Hawsers) and the cakes displayed in the window used to make our mouths water. At the step of the City of Paris public house on the corner of Mace Street boys used to sometimes play the mouth organ in the hope of getting money, but the landlord usually chased us off.

Chodaks in Bonner Street sold coloured ice-cream, another favourite. Opposite was Harry's the local barber, where I used to have my 'short back and sides' haircut. The men would lay back on the chair for shaving, and when they were lathered up, Harry would 'strop' the cut-throat razor on a huge strip of leather. A piece of newspaper would be at hand to remove the lather and bristles from the blade. After shaving, most men had a 'hot towel' placed on their faces. The towel was on a bright chromium-plated gas heater. For my own hair-cut a board used to be placed across the arms of the chair to make it the correct height.



*On the sand at  
Ramsgate, about 1934;  
Sam, sister Esther,  
Mum and Dad.*

Further along Bonner Street was Hawkins the Undertaker. In the workshop just in from the front door coffins were always on trestles. Mum had a cleaning job there and sometimes I would go with her. They had a wind-up gramophone and, believe it or not, one of the records was 'Ain't it grand to be blooming well dead'! Funerals were common sights. As children we were always fascinated to see the horse drawn hearse and carriages drawn by jet black horses with black plumed feathers attached to their heads. As the funeral passed along the street people would stop and pay respects, even if the deceased was unknown to them, and men would remove their flat caps.

The old rag shop was close at hand. Any old rags and jam jars were taken there for a few coppers which would be spent, more often than not, in the toy shop almost next door. Lead soldiers were my favourites here. The heads broke off regularly. My Mum always had to drag me past this shop, sometimes even taking me through Mace Street to avoid it.

Our local church was St. James the Less in St. James Avenue. Although we did not attend Sunday School regularly, we did go on special occasions like Easter. After weddings at the church we used to hunt through the confetti on the ground looking for the small silver coloured horse-shoes. My Mum and Dad were married there, as were my eldest sister and her husband.

We had an old wireless powered by an accumulator which had to have a regular charge as soon as the power began to fade. I used to love listening to 'Monday Night at Eight' in which I believe the late Arthur Askey starred with his contemporary Richard (Stinker) Murdoch. 'Children's Hour', 'Toy Town', 'Larry the Lamb' and 'Worzel Gummidge' were other favourites. We also had a wind-up gramophone, the kind with the huge horn shown on HMV records.

On Saturday mornings we went to the Victoria Cinema in Grove Road. Special performances were put on for children with favourites like Tom Mix and Ken Maynard, and of course the weekly episodes of Flash Gordon, which always finished at a vital point which made us return to find out what would happen the following Saturday,

Street entertainment was something we loved, like the buskers playing the 'bones' and 'spoons', an art which I am afraid has died out. Most of the time, though, we had to make our own games. A rope tied to a lamp-post was a favourite, swinging round and round. Marbles, peg-tops and whipping tops were also a craze at one time or another. A game I remember was 'Hi-Jimmy Knacker'. There would be two teams of five or six lads in each. One team would have a lad with his back to the wall. The rest would then bend forward behind each other, forming a long 'piggy back', the lad at the wall acting as a cushion. The other team would run from across the road in turn and jump as far as possible on to the backs of those bending down. The object was to try to make them collapse, and if they did, a cry of 'weak horses' would be called out.

Cigarette cards were another form of amusement. They are no longer available from cigarette packets, although my wife Rita and I now collect cards that come with a certain brand of tea. We played with the cards by standing them against a wall at an angle, stepping back a few paces and flicking another card (placed between the first and second fingers) at those cards stacked along the wall. Any that were knocked down were won. There were also 'gambling schools' with the cigarette cards used in place of money.

Dad often took me hiking during the summer — we went to Box Hill and Leith Hill and once made a trip to the 'Devils Punchbowl' and nearly got lost on Hindhead Common. I was fortunate in that he not only took me out of London on trips, but frequently took me to Central London, the Tower, Tower Bridge and the museums and also to Bermondsey, where he himself came from originally. We would regularly take the number 47 from Shoreditch, which would take us to Duke Street Hill, where we boarded a tram. Trams often made me feel unwell with their rolling motion. Grandma Vincent lived in Bermondsey and I still remember her delicious cherry pie.

Victoria Park wasn't far from where we lived, and its wide recreation areas were a delight to the many people who had no gardens. There were red deer, peacocks, wallabies, goats and guinea pigs in enclosures and the Aviary was full of coloured birds of all varieties. In the Boating Lake we used to do 'dragging'. Two lads would paddle, holding a sack at each end and pull it through the water, We rarely caught any fish but it gave us a sense of adventure — especially when we had to keep an eye out for the park keeper. The flower beds in the park were lovely. Surplus plants from the flower beds and greenhouses were given away free once a year to those who wanted them. We had no garden, but many gardens and window boxes around Bethnal Green were brightened up by people who queued in the park.

There was a small lake for model boats in Victoria Park and Dad once had the idea that it would be nice for us to have our own boat to sail. He bought a brown model yacht from the local junk shop (as it was known) on the corner of Hersee Place and Bonner Street. He made all the new spars, obtained some metal for the keel from work and Mum had the job of running up some sails from an old bed-sheet. The great day came for the launch of our project, when I proudly carried the completed model to the Park. With a favourable breeze blowing the yacht glided across the water to the delight of us all.

Dad was able to save enough to take us for an annual holiday at Ramsgate. We travelled by train and stayed with a Mr. and Mrs. White in Boundary Road. On the sand, Dad would dig a big pit for us and we would build sand castles. Dad had a Brownie box camera and the highlights of our holiday are now frozen in time in our old photo album.

My schooling in Bethnal Green began in Cranbrook Road Infants. One memory of that phase of my education is having a handkerchief pinned to my pullover, like most of the other children, to prevent loss. Learning to read was done in parrot fashion, as was learning the 'times' tables. Children

were called to the front of the class to read from a book and I was no exception. Dropping my 'itches' was my normal way of speaking, but teachers insisted that we must all pronounce the letter 'h'. They never succeeded. Although my East End accent has almost disappeared I am still proud that I was born a cockney. I still have my old school photographs and often wonder where my old school chums are today.

The Headmistress of Sewardstone Road School, where I went as a junior, was Miss Dean. For some reason we nicknamed her 'Polly'. She was a short woman, but what she lacked in height she made up for in strictness of teaching. It was frightening in some ways and we were wary of approaching her. I remember having to ask if she would sign an application form for Bethnal Green Library. Her only comment was 'Can you read?'. We would march into position at Assembly in the morning to the strains of 'Men of Harlech' played on the piano by none other than a teacher who came from Wales.

Once a year there was a fancy dress ball at the school. Originality was what was looked for. The more affluent parents hired costumes for their children and many of them looked very nice. I am pleased to say, though, that my Mum was a dab hand with needle and cotton, and from odds and ends, made me an outfit depicting Oliver Twist, complete with bowl and spoon and a small placard saying, 'Oliver Twist asks for more'. I am pleased to say I won a prize. The schoolkeeper there was a Mr. Rocket, and you can guess what fun we had with that name, especially when Guy Fawkes night approached!

Because my complexion was very pale and it was thought a spell of fresh air might help, I was sent for about a year to Bow Road Open Air School. I had all my meals there, for which Mum paid about 5/- per week. We used to have a compulsory rest in the afternoons. The journey to school was by bus and tram. I would get on the bus in Green Street (now the western end of Roman Road) at the end of Bonner Street, which would take me along Grove Road to Mile End, where I would get the tram along Bow Road to school.

I started my senior education at Cranbrook Road school. The classrooms there were three-tiered, giving the teachers a good overview of the pupils. We sat at wooden desks with cast-iron legs, each desk made for two. Boys and girls were taught separately and even at playtime we were separated. An unusual feature of the school was that it had a roof playground, surrounded by a high wall. Many a time I remember a ball being kicked too high and ending up in the street below.

Mr. Alvey, the headmaster, was a strict disciplinarian. If you failed to heed the spoken word, corporal punishment was handed out. A whack across the open palm with the cane was something I had once and once only. One of our tutors was a gentleman by the name of Mr. Card who was, unfortunately, hard of hearing. It was common practice to 'hiss' in the classroom when he was there. The school caretaker was a Mr. Godley V.C., although he would never tell us how he won it.



*Cranbrook Street and School, 1933.*

The year 1935 saw the celebration of the Silver Jubilee of King George V and Queen Mary. Door to door collections were made weekly to raise money for street parties. The street was closed to traffic on the day and gaily decorated from one side to the other. Tables were laid out end to end forming a long eating place with chairs to sit on. There was plenty of jelly, cakes and lemonade. The weather was sunny. Mum said 'Make the most of it, Sam, it doesn't happen very often.' But two years later we had another party to celebrate the coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. This time the weather wasn't so kind and the party was transferred to the Cricketers Arms Public House in Old Ford Road. On both occasions we were given china beakers at school. I still have the 1935 one.

Prior to the outbreak of war in 1939, I remember going to Cranbrook Road School for a gas-mask, which was issued in a small cardboard box.



Coming out of the cinema one Saturday morning we saw barrage balloons aloft in the sky. The newspapers were full of hope and despair. Young as I was I realised that war was soon to come. There was talk at school about evacuation and explanations about how it would take place. Then it happened. On 2nd September we were marshalled at Cranbrook Road School with my suitcase with a change of clothes and my gas-mask in a box. Because my sisters had left school they would not be coming with me, so they, with Mum, saw me off at the station. I shall never forget Mum saying to me, 'I'll send the comics on, son,' and a kind policeman adding, 'That's right, Ma, keep 'em happy'. How they felt I don't know.

We were not told of our destination but arrived in the late afternoon at Wellington in Somerset. We were tired and weary. We were all given a medical examination and then billeted into complete strangers. It was quite an experience for a twelve year old, but I soon settled down to a totally new world. There were green fields and country walks and above all, an abundance of apple orchards. For twelve months I enjoyed it but I was always longing for home. I wrote to my parents and my Dad came down and took me back to Bethnal Green. I came right back into the Blitz.

The first daylight bombing raid on London came on a Saturday afternoon early in September (1940). Squadrons of German bombers flew over the East End, their marking quite visible from the ground. It was really quite frightening. The war had finally come to our doorsteps. The London Docks were set on fire, with huge balls of smoke rising into the clear sky. As night fell the smoke took on a red glow from the flames reflected on the silver-sheened barrage balloons which acted as beacons. Confirming our worst fears, the Germans returned guided by the fire and illuminated balloons.

As our own backyard was too small for a shelter, we spent many nights in the street surface shelter. I had to try to sleep lying across my parents' laps. In the end Dad made up his mind and decided we would take a chance and sleep indoors downstairs. We survived the bombs that thudded all round us. We had broken window panes and after they had been repaired we placed sticky tape diagonally across each pane to stop flying glass. Unexploded bombs were a hazard. One Sunday morning one went off in Hersee Place, hurling huge pieces of paving stone over the roof tops to come crashing down on the road. One lump dropped down on to our scullery roof, sending flakes of whitewash into some setting blancmanges that Mum had just made — our Sunday afters ruined by the Germans!

Some time after the Blitz we moved away from Bethnal Green and I did not return for many years. Alma Road had a name change to Doric Road in 1937. It was demolished in the sixties along with adjacent streets to make way for the Cranbrook Estate. At least the name 'Cranbrook' has been retained. I understand from Mrs. Doreen Kendall, who lives on the Estate and who encouraged me to put these memories down on paper, that Cranbrook School has been converted into luxury apartments. I'm sure the present occupants of those lofty rooms must hear the echo of children's voices from long ago.

## ANGLO-CATHOLIC SOCIALIST CLERGY IN EAST LONDON 1870 — 1970

Kenneth Leech

'MY LORD' exclaimed the chaplain to the Bishop of London in the 1860s, 'I saw three men in green, and I do not think they will easily be put down'. (1) He had been visiting one of the early ritualist churches which had grown up during the second phase of the movement initiated at Oxford in 1833. Interest in the social dimensions of the Oxford Movement was revived several years ago when its hundred and fiftieth anniversary was celebrated in Britain and the United States. One study suggested, contrary to the conventional wisdom, that the movement from its beginnings was 'radical in its politics and "Sociology"'. (2) Certainly the early Tractarians were strongly anti-erastian, and erastianism, the doctrine of the state control of the church, was to them, and to others, 'the most pressing question of 1833'. (3) They wished to break the church-state alliance, and the logical end of their position, had it been pursued, would have been the disestablishment of the Church of England. But only on this issue can they be seen as radicals. Keble believed, even during this early period, that the lower classes must obey their masters. Newman, while he wrote that the church was created to 'meddle' in the affairs of the world (4), and was critical of the wealthy, believed that the movement should avoid political involvement. And, almost without exception, it did.

The second phase of the movement, the Ritualist phase, was also for the most part marked by a lack of political concern. It was during this phase, from the 1850s onwards, that the 'ritualist slum priests' became important, the most famous of them being Charles Lowder of St. Peter's, London Docks. (5) From this period onwards the East End of London, and particularly the districts of Whitechapel, St. George's in the East, Bethnal Green, and Shoreditch, was to play a central role in the growth of Anglo-Catholicism. Lowder was probably the first priest in London to wear eucharistic vestments, (6) and during 1859 and 1860 there were riots in the parish of St. George's in the East (out of which St. Peter's was formed). In 1877 the hostility to Lowder focussed on the practice of sacramental confessions. (7) Ritualism was established in a more papalist form in Hoxton and Haggerston through the Haggerston Church Extension Fund. But the Ritualist clergy were, on the whole, paternalist in their style and personal in their ministry. There were some, such as Arthur Stanton at St. Alban's, Holborn, and Robert Dolling at Portsmouth and later at Poplar who moved in a more socially radical direction, and some indeed who saw ritualism itself in class terms. When A. H. Mackonochie, vicar of St. Alban's, Holborn, was suspended, a protest delegation told the bewildered Archbishop Tait that ritualism was 'a working man's question.' 'When the working classes . . . become aware of the way in which their heritage in church matters is being attacked, they will rise up, and the Church of England, as an established church, will fall'. (8) Most of the ritualist slum priests were opposed to the establishment, and in many areas, including the East End, ritualism broke the identification of Anglicanism



with respectability and with the bourgeoisie, and helped to create a church of the poor.

It was a third phase which created the phenomenon of Anglo-Catholic socialism, and the key figure is undoubtedly the Bethnal Green curate Stewart Headlam. (9) Headlam was one of the most controversial priests of the late 19th Century, and was constantly getting dismissed from successive curacies until eventually Bishop Jackson removed his licence altogether. He supported the theatre, the music hall, the ballet and the pub; campaigned with Charles Bradlaugh for the repeal of the Blasphemy Act; opposed church schools, the establishment and the monarchy; stood bail for Oscar Wilde; and urged the nationalisation of land. He saw Jesus as 'a socialistic carpenter', and the church as 'a co-operative for human welfare and righteousness'. (10) He taught the Athanasian Creed to the secularists at Old Street Hall of Science, and described the Church Catechism as 'a most important document against oppression and for liberty'. (11) He wrote the Fabian Tract document on Christian Socialism, (12) and claimed that all who assisted at Holy Communion were bound to be Holy Communists. (13) On the jubilee of Queen Victoria, Headlam wrote:

The Queen's Jubilee is good; but the People's Jubilee is better. Why may not the year upon which we now enter be the Jubilee of both Queen and People? For the Jubilee of the Hebrews, as ordained by the great statesman whom God for their deliverance raised up and inspired was the Jubilee of the whole People; and its observance was founded upon, and was expressly designed to conserve, a divinely ordained system of Land Nationalisation. (14)

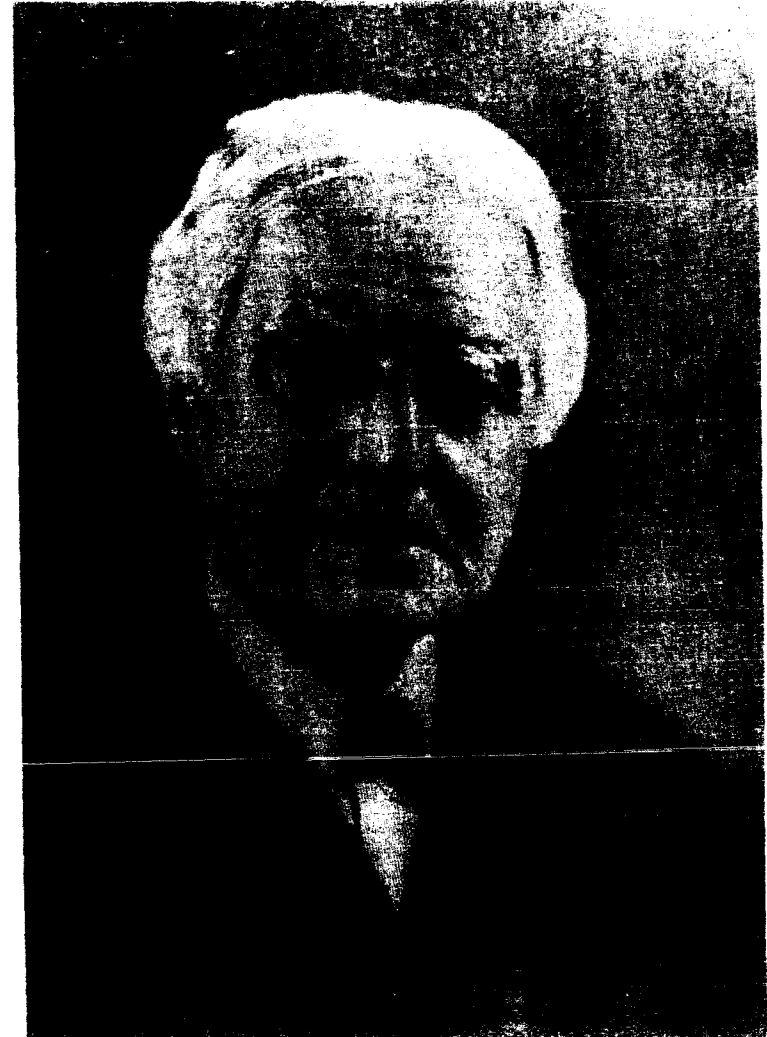
He attacked the establishment of the Eton Mission in Hackney Wick, (15) urged the Lambeth Conference of 1888 to tackle the question of private ownership of land, (16) and wrote concerning the Church of England:

... you cannot expect the Church to live up to the law of her being until you have disestablished and disowned those whom you now allow to lord it over the Church, and left her free to manage her own affairs. (17)

Headlam was best known for his support of the ballet and the stage, and it was for his support of music halls that he was finally removed from his curacy at St. Matthew's, Bethnal Green, in January 1878. (18) Headlam's views on the stage were an integral part of his theology, for he held that 'a strong faith in the incarnation and the Real Presence of Jesus Christ sanctifies all human things, not excluding human mirth and beauty' (19) Theologically, Headlam was a disciple of F. D. Maurice, but held that Maurice's theology was incomplete unless it was embodied in sacramental worship. Hence he brought about the fusion of Maurician social theology with Catholic sacramentalism and ritualism, and it was out of this fusion that the Anglo-Catholic socialist tradition developed. His thought was far removed from that of the Tractarians with their belief in submission to authority. Headlam emphasised the critical approach and the place of doubt. 'Question everything', he told people, 'take nothing for granted; prove, sift, test every opinion, however venerable, however cherished.' (20) The Guild of St. Matthew, which

he founded as a parish guild in Bethnal Green in 1877, was an explicitly socialist grouping from 1884 (some months before Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation became socialist). Guild members made a close link between sacramentalism and socialism.

We have from the beginning in this Guild, and rightly, connected the restoration of the Mass to its proper place with our secular and political work; our sacramentalism with our socialism . . . We are socialists because we are sacramentarians. (21)



They saw land ownership as the central political issue, and were greatly influenced by the economic theories of Henry George. Prominent members of the Guild included Charles Marson, author of *God's Co-operative Society*, (22) and Thomas Hancock. It was Hancock who coined the phrase 'the banner of Christ in the hands of the socialists' and called the Magnificat 'the hymn of the universal social revolution. (23)

Headlam died in 1924. Several years earlier a young priest arrived in Poplar who was to stay for forty years and who became a legendary figure in the East End. His name was St. John Beverley Groser. Groser had become a committed socialist after leaving the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield, and his position led to the publication of a letter in the college gazette warning that the college's reputation was being damaged by the growing belief that all its former students were 'Reds'. (24) After being dismissed from his curacy in Poplar, along with his colleague Jack Bucknall, Groser moved to Christ Church, Watney Street in 1922, and he was to stay there for most of his ministry. Hannan Swaffer, writing in the *Daily Herald* in 1936, described him as 'the Anglo-Catholic priest who is better known among the East End masses than any other clergyman'. (25) Groser joined the Catholic Crusade, founded by Conrad Noel (26), and the East London chapter of the Crusade was based at Watney Street. He was grappling with issues raised by Marxism in the early 1930s, and was probably one of the first Anglo-Catholic priests to speak explicitly in terms of class struggle. (27) However, the Catholic Crusade split over the Stalin-Trotsky dispute, Bucknall in particular taking a strong pro-Trotsky line. (28) It has been claimed that one of the reasons for the expulsion of the early Trotskyists from the Communist Party was their alleged association with Conrad Noel and the Crusade. (29) Groser was expelled from the Crusade for refusing to give official support to Harry Pollitt who was standing as parliamentary candidate for Whitechapel in the 1931 election, but as late as 1936, Noel was writing to Groser about the division in the Crusade over loyalty to the Communist Party line. (30)

Groser wrote only one book, significantly called *Politics and Persons*, (31) and many articles, most of them in his Stepney magazine. One entry there in 1931 is depressingly contemporary.

Sometime before the election we were told that "the Nation" was in the grip of a "crisis" and that drastic economy was necessary to preserve our stability. Economies were to begin as usual with those least able to bear them — there were to be cuts in social services and for the unemployed. We at Christ Church felt that we ought to come out in protest against such injustice and we started a campaign by leaflets and open air meetings in which we have tried to point out that the causes of the present crisis lie at the root of the devilish and inhuman capitalist system under which we live. (32)

Groser saw fascism as 'the greatest menace to the Christian religion in the world today, (33) and he played a major role in combating the campaign of Sir Oswald Mosley and in the events around the Battle of Cable Street in October 1936. His involvement in this phase is worthy of separate study. (34) But three incidents from 1935 are noteworthy as indicating a prophetic element in his perception.

Firstly, he was pointing, in articles and speeches, to the racial dimension of Mussolini's fascism as shown in the Abyssinian campaign. (35) Secondly, in that year the East London Church Fund's Thanksgiving Service included the singing of the hymn 'I vow to thee, my country' (also sung at the marriage of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer). Groser objected to 'the singing of a hymn which places loyalty to country above that to Christ as definitely anti-Christian. (36) Thirdly, Groser was one of the earliest commentators on what later became known as 'sus', the arrest of individuals on suspicion of being likely to commit an offence, and he was writing in the *Daily Herald* in 1935 on the abuse of police powers in relation to the unemployed in Stepney. (37) Groser is best remembered in the East End for his support, as president of the Stepney Tenants' Defence League, for the rent strikes at the end of the 1930s. (38)

It was during Groser's period, and at his instigation, that in 1944 the Society of St. Francis established a small house in Cable Street. Their leading member, who became an integral part of the developing 'coloured quarter' (39) of Cable Street, was Father Neville Palmer, a pacifist and early supporter of the Committee of 100, the section of the anti-nuclear movement which was committed to civil disobedience. Neville lived and worked in Cable Street from 1944 to 1963. In 1947 Jack Boggis, a former member of the Catholic Crusade, became rector of the local parish of St. George in the East. Although not a member of the Communist Party, Boggis supported Phil Piratin, who had been the first Communist councillor in London, and who had been elected MP for Mile End in 1945. Boggis was active in both the Socialist Christian League (SCL) and the Society of Socialist Clergy and Ministers (SSCM). In 1951, Boggis's former curate, Gresham Kirkby, an anarchist, was appointed vicar of St. Paul's, Bow Common, and became chairman of the Socialist Christian League. Kirkby, unlike most of the Anglo-Catholic socialists, was more papalist, and his church, throughout the 1950s, anticipated most of the liturgical changes in the Roman rite which later became normative after the Second Vatican Council. He was the first Anglican priest to go to prison for anti-bomb activities (in 1961). He was a member of the Committee of 100. His worker-priest colleague, John Rowe, who also went to prison, was one of the founders of the Stepney branch of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and until the early 1960s was a member of the Society of the Catholic Commonwealth, the American order founded by Frederick Hastings Smyth, which sought to synthesize Catholic theology and Marxism. (40) Both Kirkby and Rowe are still active in the East End.

Meanwhile in 1955 the Reverend Stanley Evans had become vicar of Holy Trinity, Dalston. Evans had been the leading figure in the Council of Clergy and Ministers for Common Ownership, founded in the early 1940s, and edited its journal *Magnificat*. He had held no living in the Church of England for twenty years, largely because of his socialist views. In 1949 he was the *Daily Worker* correspondent at the trial of Cardinal Mindszenty, was one of the leaders of the *Russia Today* group (which became the British Soviet Friendship Society), and wrote a history of Bulgaria as well as many articles

on events in the eastern bloc. He was leading parties to the Soviet Union long before it was safe or fashionable to do so. He was constantly at the centre of controversies, campaigning for amnesty for the Rosenbergs who were executed in 1957, and for the release of Tony Ambatielos from prison in Greece. Evans also edited *Religion and the People* during the late 40s and 50s. It maintained a continuous critique of the social record of the churches, and was a major source, at times the only source, for accurate information on events in eastern Europe. Its issues between 1946-57 included reports on the church in Yugoslavia, church-state relations in Poland, translations of sermons by Russian Orthodox bishops, evangelicalism in the USSR, as well as a commentary on fascism and the churches and detailed coverage of the 'germ warfare' controversy which surrounded the 'Red Dean' of Canterbury, Hewlett Johnson, in 1952. Evans followed the Communist Partyline fairly closely, and preached a glowing memorial sermon for Stalin. (41) However, after the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, he wrote *Russia Reviewed* (1956) in which he admitted to grievous errors in his treatment of many aspects of Soviet life. (42) From 1957 to his death in 1965 he edited *Junction*, a 'journal of Anglican realism'. During Evans' time in Dalston, Holy Trinity became a focal point for the Christian Left in East London. It was as a result of a series of meetings convened by Evans that the SCL and the SSCM merged in 1960 to form the Christian Socialist Movement of which he became the first chairman.

The phenomenon of Anglo-Catholic socialism in the East End of London demands more detailed and comprehensive study. But some concluding points should be made. First, there was, from an early period, a striking gulf between the ritualism of the socialist group and the mainstream of the ritualist movement. To some extent this was related to papalism and non-papalism. Conrad Noel was violently anti-papal, extolling the virtues of 'Merrie England' and the 'Englishness' of Catholic life, and was suspected of modernism by more traditional Anglo-Catholics. In the East End, the Anglo-Catholic socialists tended to concentrate in Stepney, while the more Romanising wing of the movement, in Shoreditch and Haggerston, moved in quite a different direction. Secondly, the Anglo-Catholic socialist clergy from Headlam onwards played a major role in secular socialist politics. The claim, often made about 'Christian Socialists' in general, that they formed a subculture cut off from the mainstream of the secular Left, is not correct of most of them. Stanley Evans, in particular, was probably better known and more active within secular socialist campaigns than he was within the church. Thirdly, it is probably true that from the period immediately following the Russian Revolution, a division emerged between the Marxist tendency, represented by Groser, Evans and the SSCM, and a more libertarian, often anarchist, tendency, represented by Kirkby and others. Both tendencies looked back to Noel as part of their ancestry. The links between the Catholic Crusade and early Trotskyism need further study. George Orwell described Anglo-Catholicism as 'the ecclesiastical equivalent of Trotskyism', (43) and there are a number of parallels which need exploring. Valerie Pitt has claimed that 'social passion may turn an Anglian Catholic towards socialism or even

to revolutionary Marxism . . . but rarely to anarchism or a seriously radical critique of social institutions, and *never* to Republicanism'. (44) In fact, while Anglo-Catholic anarchists are rare, they were part of this East End movement, and almost all the people I have mentioned were republicans.

Today in the East End the ritualist movement survives, more or less as it was before the Second World War. A whole wing of Anglo-Catholicism became stranded on a 1930s ecclesiastical sandbank, and has remained there ever since. Many of the great shrines in Hoxton, Haggerston and the East End proper are gone. In Anglicanism as a whole, a vague liberal and reformist atmosphere prevails. The Jubilee Group, formed in Bethnal Green in 1974 as a specifically Catholic and socialist tendency, has made some impact, though less than is sometimes believed. But over the period from Headlam to the present day, the East End of London has contained most of the conflicting and divergent trends within the Catholic revival, and the ways in which these anticipated and foreshadowed later theological and political developments remain an important and neglected area of study.

*This paper was first read at a History Workshop Conference in 1983.*

#### NOTES

The place of publication is London unless otherwise noted.

1. cited in Tom Driberg, *Ruling Passions* (Cape, 1977), p.45.
2. John R. Griffin, *The Oxford Movement: a revision* (Front Royal Virginia, Christendom Publications, 1981), p.1.
3. *op.cit.* p.1.
4. *History of the Arians* (1833), Part 2, Chapter 3, p.264.
5. See L. E. Ellsworth, *Charles Lowder and the Ritualist Movement* (Darton, Longman and Todd, 1982).
6. *ibid*, p.40. See also John M. Harwood, 'Vanished Church, Vanished Streets: the Parish of St. Saviour's, Hoxton' in *East London Record* 9, (1986).
7. See *East London Observer*, 16 June 1877.
8. Michael Reynolds, *Martyr of Ritualism: Father Mackonochie of St. Alban's, Holborn* (Faber, 1965), pp.190-1.
9. The only major study of Headlam is an unpublished thesis by John R. Orens, *The Mass, the Masses and the Music Hall: a study of Stewart Headlam's Radical Anglicanism*, (Columbia PhD. 1976). The only copy in Britain is in Tower Hamlets Central Library, Bancroft Road, London E1. A small pamphlet with the same title by Orens is published by the Jubilee Group, St. Clement's House, Sirdar Road, London W11. See also Orens' essay 'Priesthood and Prophecy: the development of Anglo-Catholic Socialism' in K. Leech and R. Williams (eds), *Essays Catholic and Radicals* (Bowerdean Press, 1983), pp.158-180.
10. S. D. Headlam, *The Service of Humanity and other Sermons* (John Hodges, 1882), pp. 13, 59.
11. S. D. Headlam, *The Church Catechism and the Emancipation of Labour* (G. J. Palmer, n.d.), p.3.
12. S. D. Headlam, *Christian Socialism* (Fabian Tract No. 42, Fabian Society, November 1892).
13. S. D. Headlam, *The Laws of Eternal Life* (Frederick Verinder, 1888), p.24.

14. *Church Reformer* 5:7 (July 1886) p. 146. In contrast to most 'Christian Socialists' of his day and ours, Headlam was not a monarchist. He held that 'the Hebrew prophets' protest against monarchy is as necessary now as ever and on the same grounds, viz. that under a monarchy bishops become flunkies' (*ibid* 6:7 (July 1887) p.145), but he felt that 'the time is not yet ripe for a Republic in England' (*ibid.* 6:6 (June 1887), p.122).
15. *ibid* 7:6 (June 1888) p.128.
16. *ibid* 7:8 (August 1888) pp. 180-2.
17. *Christian Socialism, op.cit.* p.9.
18. See *Theatres and Music Halls* (2nd edn. Women's Printing Society 1878)—the lecture that caused all the trouble. On the background see Orens *op.cit.*, and, for a shorter account, Kenneth Leech in *For Christ and the People* (ed. M. B. Reckitt, SPCK, 1968), pp. 61-88.
19. Letter to Bishop Jackson, 7 December 1877.
20. *The Service of Humanity, op.cit.* p.37.
21. *Church Reformer* 10:10 (Oct 1891) p.221.
22. On Marson see Reg Groves, *To the Edge of Triumph: a study of Charles Marson, priest and socialist* (Jubilee Group, 1985).
23. On Hancock see Stephen Yeo's essay in *For Christ and the People, op.cit.* pp. 1-60.
24. *Minfield Gazette* 14 (Easter 1927) p.20.
25. *Daily Herald*, 19 Oct 1936.
26. On Noel see Reg Groves, *Conrad Noel and the Thaxted Movement* (Merlin Press, 1967).
27. In an undated manuscript, written sometime in the 1920s, Groser stated his general agreement with the doctrine of class war, and attacked the position of the Industrial Christian Fellowship. 'I feel that the attempt of people like the ICF to kid themselves that capitalist and worker can live in real brotherhood and remain still in their respective economic categories, only comes as a refusal to face firm realities; the class struggle is a fact; the class war is rapidly developing, and we have no right to shut our eyes to the fact.' ('The Materialist Conception of History,' undated MS). Christ Church Campaign for Socialism held a series of meetings on 'Christ and the Class War' at the end of 1932 (*East London Advertiser*, 12 Nov 1932).
28. Bucknall wrote: 'Trotsky calls himself Atheist, but if, while denying a creator of the Universe, he yet asserts by his life and work Eternal Goodness, Truth and Beauty which are God's character, he will help in the building of the Kingdom of God. Stalin and the Stalimised Communists of today have done great work, but if their Atheism is self-satisfied, so that by their conduct they deny their eternal principles, any society based on such a denial must come to irreparable disaster. We are at a crisis in the history of the race. If there is a voice crying in the wilderness, we must have ears to hear. It may not be accidental that Trotsky is a Jew. It may be that he is in line with the great Jewish prophets of the ages. If so, we should do well to take heed—for salvation is of such Jews.' (*Catholic Crusader*, 23, 16 Jan 1933, p.6).
29. See *Daily Worker*, 5 and 23 Aug 1932. See also Raphael Samuel, 'British Marxist Historians 1880 — 1980', *New Left Review* 120 (1980), p.68.
30. Letter from Noel to Groser, 29 Aug 1936, in the possession of the Revd. David Platt of Woking, England.
31. SCM Press, 1949.
32. *Christ Church Monthly*, in the possession of the Revd. David Platt. The month is not clear, but the year was 1931.
33. *Sunday Referee*, 8 Nov 1936.
34. There was considerable coverage of Groser's views on the growth of the Fascist movement and anti-Semitism in the national press during 1936. He claimed that Mosley's anti-Semitic campaign began in Watney Street (See Dudley Barker, 'Father Groser probes East End unrest', *Evening Standard*, 3 Nov 1936, p.15).
35. Groser wrote: 'In his war speeches, in his reference to the heroism of war, in his assertion of the superiority of white over black people, and in his utter disregard of the first principles of the Christian religion, Mussolini stands at the apex of a movement which is, I believe, the greatest challenge that has faced the Christian religion since the first few centuries.' (*Christ Church Monthly* 3: 7 July 1935, p.3.) Mussolini's ideas were, he claimed, 'a definite repudiation of the basic ideas of Christianity and the brotherhood of man. They seek to alter the very conception of God to fit in with their schemes of nation building and national aggrandisement by aggression. They put the nation first and God second . . . Once God is believed to be a national God and not the Father of all men, he can and does become the tool of national aggrandisement at the expense of other people. Mussolini can justify his attitude to Abyssinia on the ground that these people don't matter anyhow. The attitude of Hitler to the Jews in Germany and his attempt to build up an Aryan Church excluding from the Christian assembly those who don't fit in with his ideas is a natural consequence.' (*ibid* pp. 3-4).
36. Letter to the Bishop of Stepney, 27 June 1935, in the possession of the Revd. David Platt. The Bishop replied saying that he chose the hymn because he was moved by the music (28 June 1935).
37. 'Loitering with intent', *Daily Herald*, 13 March 1935.
38. For the general background to the East End campaigns see Joe Jacobs, *Out of the Ghetto* (Janet Simon, 29 Troutbeck, Albany Street, London NW1, 1978); and Phil Piratin, *Our Flag Stays Red* (Lawrence and Wishart, 1978 edn.)
39. See Michael Banton, *The Coloured Quarter* (Cape, 1955) for a detailed account of Cable Street at the time. The title is misleading in its suggestion of something approaching a ghetto.
40. A detailed study of Smyth and the SCC is being written by Terry Brown. For a brief discussion of some aspects of Smyth's thoughts see Ted Mellor and John Rowe, *Liturgy and Commonwealth* (Jubilee Group, 1980).
41. *Joseph Stalin, an Address* (Society of Socialist Clergy and Ministers, 1953.)
42. *Russia Reviewed* (Religion and the People Publications, 1956).
43. *Inside the Whale and other essays* (Penguin, 1979 edn), p. 35.
44. Valerie Pitt, 'The Oxford Movement — a case of cultural distortion' *Essays Catholic and Radical, op.cit.* p.219.

## NOTES AND NEWS

At the 1988 Annual Local History Lecture, organised by The Globe Town Neighbourhood, Bill Fishman spoke on 'East End 1888'. His book of the same title has been issued in paperback by the original publisher, Duckworth, priced at £9.95. This seems rather expensive, considering the hardback was less than double that price. Reviews of the book were everywhere complimentary, including that by Chris Lloyd in last year's *Record*, so perhaps the price will be no deterrent. Patricia Craven, whose memories of Stepney appeared in *Record* 8 (1985) has written to express her own enthusiasm. 'Mr Fishman took me by the hand', she writes of the book, 'and showed me 1888 as it really was, as if he had opened a magic window on the past, enabling me to visualise that time as never before.' Ruth Richardson, who, like Bill Fishman, gave an excellent talk to the Society a few years back, has her *Death, Dissection and the Destitute* in paperback. It's a Pelican, priced at £5.99 — less than one third of the hardback price.

R. F. Ireland of Chiswick bought *East London Record* number 9 at the London Museum and was surprised and pleased to see Cyril Demarne's article, 'The Imperial, Canning Town'. The reason? 'In his last years, my mother's father, Frederick White, and her mother, Fanny White, were caretakers of the Imperial. They lived at 187 Barking Road, where they provided digs for visiting artists and I have a Visitor's Book covering part of this time in 1913'. In response to Dr. Brooke's 'Notes on the Agapemonites' in *Record* 11, C. J. Spittal of Bristol has written to offer supplementary references. These are William Hepworth Dixon, *Spiritual Wives* (Hurst and Blackett, 1868), vol. 1, pp. 226-231; Ronald Mathews, *English Messiahs. Studies of Six English Religious Pretenders 1656-1927* (Methuen, 1936), pp. 163-195; Charles Mander, *The Reverend Prince and his Abode of Love* (E. P. Publishing, East Ardsley, Wakefield, 1926). Mr. Spittal has also drawn attention to Aubrey Menen's novel, *The Abode of Love* (Chatto and Windus, 1957) and to the fact that most of the 'church' records that survive are with Somerset County Library.

Terence Stamp's *Stamp Album* (Grafton, £2.95) covers the actor's East London childhood — he was born in Bow. The sequel, *Coming Attractions* (Grafton, £3.50) has him going up West to fame and fortune. More widely publicised has been his *Double Feature* (Bloomsbury, £14.95) which has come out at the time of writing and probably contains little of local interest. The early part of Lew Grade's *Come Dancing*, now in paperback (Fontana, £3.95) has some local interest. Iain Sinclair's novel *White Chappel, Scarlet Tracings* (Paladin, £3.95) takes us back to 1888 and all that.

This part of the *Record* is normally written in July and, since the magazine does not come out until October, it can never be anything like up-to-date. Three publications that were due out around July, therefore, can only be briefly mentioned. *Woodberry Down Memories* consists of a brief history of the controversy that surrounded the construction of this estate, as well as the reminiscences of residents. This excellent 80 page publication is available from Ed ROP, City Lit, Bolt Court Centre, 6 Bolt Court Street, EC4A 3DY. It is worth the price of £2.50 (which includes postage) for the photographs alone. *Cheerful Charlie* is the biography of Charles Percy McGahey, born in Bethnal Green in 1871, whose career in football and cricket extended beyond the First World War, and who later turned to coaching. As a sport fanatic, I cannot wait to get my copy of the book. Priced at £10.95 hardback and £7.95 softback, it is available from the author Jan Kemp, 74 Lee Lotts, Great Wakering, Essex SS3 0HB (add £1 postage). A review copy of Peter Saunders' *The Simple Annals* was promised us for the end of May but as it had not arrived by July, all I can do is quote from the publicity material. The first part of the book is set in Essex and the second half 'is set in London and gives a detailed and vivid account of life in Bethnal Green in the first part of this century'. It is available from Alan Sutton Publishing as a £7.95 paperback.

Also coming from Alan Sutton in October 1989 will be David Mander's *Hackney in Old Photographs before 1914* (£6.90) which will contain the largest number of old photographs of the era so far published. The Hackney Society's *Lost Hackney*, Elizabeth Robinson's survey of buildings that have gone for good, is also due shortly. Finally in Hackney, *Gentlemen in the Building Line* is a history of the development of South Hackney up to 1914. Details of this publication, priced at £4.95 may be had from the author, Isobel Watson, 29 Stepney Green, E1 3JX.

*Local History* No. 20 (December 1988). Contains an interesting article by George Oliver on how to reproduce old photographs most effectively in publications. It is illustrated with ten excellently presented photographs. The magazine costs £2, postage included, from 3 Devonshire Promenade, Lenton, Nottingham NB7 2DS.

*The Terrier* — the newsletter of the Friends of Hackney Archives — for winter 1988 and spring 1989 has two extracts from a tape made some years ago recording the memories of the late Israel Renson. Called 'Memories of an Apprentice Pharmacist', they recall his experiences at a chemist shop in Brick Lane from 1923 to 1926. Further extracts are promised in future issues. The winter issue also carries Isobel Watson's 'The French Protestant Hospital'. It moved from Finsbury to near Wells Street Common in 1865 and remained there until 1939. The building later became a Catholic school for girls and, readers may recall, featured in the last two pages of M. E. Carrington's 'Stepney Memories' in *Record* 9 (1986). Details of membership of the Friends of Hackney Archives may be obtained from the Archives Department, Rose Lipman Library, de Beauvoir Road, London N1 5SQ.

*East of London: Old and New*, volumes 1 and 2 consist of 32 pages each of reproductions of views from the boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Newham and Waltham Forest, mostly from around the turn of the century, with modern photographs of the same sites taken by Brian Pigott during 1988. They are available from 29 Anne Way, Hainault, Ilford, Essex IG6 2TT, but no price appears on the booklets. The revised edition of the Official Handbook of the *Docklands Light Railway* came out last year (Capital Transport, £3.95). The booklet gives a brief historical background to local railways.

Three books of interest to supporters of local football clubs have come out recently: *The West Ham United Quiz Book*, compiled by Tony Hogg (Mainstream Publishing, £4.95; John Northcutt and Roy Shoesmith, *West Ham United. A Complete Record 1900-1987* (Breedon Books, £14.95) and James Murray, *Millwall. Lions of the South* (Indispensable Publications and Millwall F.C., £12.95).

Phillimore and Co. Ltd., who publish so many local history books, last year brought out a cheap (£1.50) pamphlet called *Running a Local History Society*. It forms part one of a series on 'The Local Historian at Work' produced by the British Association for Local Studies — the people who publish *The Local Historian*. Though based on the experiences of a history society in a parish near Cheltenham, the points covered will be useful to anyone trying to set up or improve a history society anywhere. Parts two and three of the series came out in April, 1989: Valerie Norrington's *Recording the Present* and Vic Gray and Bill Liddell's *Running a Local History Fair* (also £1.50 each).

Harry Ariel, who was born in Lodz in 1915, came to England after the Second World War and appeared in Yiddish Theatre when it was staged at the Grand Palais on Commercial Road, died on 6th July, 1989. I quote from Anne J. Kersten's Guardian Obituary: 'He was one of the last Yiddish actors in England, and it was largely through his dedication, enthusiasm and talent that Yiddish theatre has survived, long after its permanent home and Yiddish-speaking audience in the East End has gone'. Jack Dash died a month before him. Older readers will remember the struggles he led in the docks and younger ones may have listened to one of his commentaries for tourists. His classic, *Good Morning Brothers* was reprinted by Wapping Neighbourhood last year. Every East End home should have a copy.

## BOOK REVIEWS

Terry McCarthy (ed.) *The Great Dock Strike 1889*. Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1988, £14.95.

AT the time of writing this review the prospect of a centenary dock strike seems possible. The poverty trap that frequently resulted from employment by a casual labour system, 100 years ago cannot be fairly compared with today's conditions.

Terry McCarthy, has worked in the docks, has an active union background and was in charge of the National Museum of Labour History, situated close to the docks. Surprisingly, with such credentials he has only taken up an editorial role and the text reflects that it is in association with the main dockers' union, the T and GWU. The concluding 6 pages alone appear to be McCarthy's own views, and these are general. A great opportunity has been missed. The profuse re-printing of published works, has denied him a free rein for his accumulated knowledge to be used to express his theories.

He does not, for example build upon his view that John Burns should be credited more for his prevention of violence in the dispute. Where is there any evidence of new research material to reveal exciting new conclusions?

Biographical information about some of the prominent men in the dispute is rather short. Norwood, 'in appearance and manners, the very embodiment of the insolence of capitalism', and the main employer's leader, is not properly assessed. McCarthy's only opinion here, was that he was 'if not the Villain, then the technical Loser'.

Most of the one hundred illustrations are quite evocative, but only a few are directly related to the strike itself. The overall purpose, of presenting an entertaining book succeeds at this level. The 8 colour plates are brilliant and attractive but I question the necessity to corrupt the sixth plate by colour tinting. It is captioned 'An East End family enjoying the fresh air of the Kent hop fields at the time of the Great Strike'. I found the photographs of Booth's Poverty Maps in 7 colours particularly helpful for distinguishing the areas inhabited by each class near the docks.

The serious reader is handicapped on 36 occasions by the lack of page references to the published extracts.

C. J. Lloyd

Alan Palmer, *The East End. Four Centuries of London Life*. John Murray, 1989. £14.95.

REFERRING to the sources for his book Alan Palmer notes that he has been fortunate 'to have had the opportunity of reading the back numbers of three excellent periodicals: *East London Papers*; *East London Record*; and the *London Journal*. While a few of the articles from this magazine are indeed cited, I was disappointed that he found none of our 'memories and reminiscences' worth drawing, as I see these as our most valuable contribution to the history of East London.

Perhaps there just wasn't space. For the task the author has set himself, to treat 400 years of local history, in the context of the history of London as a whole, is an almost impossible task in one volume. A chapter like 'The Coming of the Docks and Railways' for example, could be extended into a full length book without exhausting all the sources. Reading the chapter headed 'The Lansbury Years' made me wonder yet again why no modern biographer has attempted a life of that extraordinary man.

Inevitably there will be disappointments over what is omitted or merely mentioned in passing, but in general the wonder is that he has been able to fit in so much so well. Indeed, as someone who has spent a few years of his life trying to do something similar I have to honestly (if grudgingly) admit that he has done it better.

The final chapter is a very good account of recent developments in East London. He manages to pull so many strands together in a readable manner that it makes what is going on around us seem almost intelligible, at least from the points of view of those directing it. Whether we agree with what is happening is another matter. But at least, having read this excellent book, we can furnish informed arguments to support our agreement or disagreement about the direction things are going in the borough.

Colm Kerrigan

Ian Mikardo — *Back-bencher*. Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1988. £12.95.

HIS parents were Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe. They arrived in the East End but moved to Portsmouth where Ian was born in 1908. He returned to the East End as a young man, and part of his political education was acquired on Mile End Waste where there was a sort of Speakers' Corner. 'A couple of Jews . . . would stop each other and start an argument, and then a passer-by would join in, and then another . . . in a few minutes there was a dred! (a little circle) . . . By midday there would be half a dozen dredls'. He began to be a speaker there, and not only an onlooker. 'It is the education, especially the political education, which it gave me in my teenage years, that keeps me bound to that bit of London between the Aldgate Pump and Bow Bridge'.

He had a chance to represent part of this area in Parliament when, having lost his seat for Reading in 1959, he was invited to apply for Poplar. He was reluctant, not because he didn't want to represent the area, but because he feared rejection. He was told they always chose local candidates. He soon got back into Parliament, and remained there until he retired in 1987.

There is much in the book of interest to students of politics, especially the politics of the left. Interestingly enough, he does not think that Labour loses votes by being too left-wing, but by not putting forward a policy sufficiently different from that of the Conservatives. He is saddened at what seems to be the increasing selfishness of society since 1945, but has some hope that we are now drawing back from the consequences.

Ann Sansom

*Edith Tudor Hart: The Eye of Conscience*

The Photo Pocket Book 1. Dirk Nishen Publishing, 1987. n.p.

BORN in Vienna, Edith Tudor Hart (1908-73) studied photography at the Bauhaus, and utilized her talent to publicize, and hence improve, the conditions of the poor. Settling in this country in 1933 (living in London and South Wales), it is her record of these impoverished communities in the 1930s which dominates this selection of her work: there are also photographs of Vienna, poignantly depicting its war-disabled beggars.

Whilst Londoners' grim domestic surroundings fifty years ago are captured with graphic precision, her groups of children, either with their friends or in family units, express emotions positive enough to dominate, even negate, their environment. The people are at once self-reliant (the tough little lad in the cap on page 86 is clearly as street-wise as they come) and reliant on, and responsive to, each other — several photographs focusing on the baby to symbolize family solidarity. This is exemplified in the photograph on page 80, which additionally vividly contrasts with the accompanying view of the same family, taken from overhead and showing them as confined within the tiniest of back-yards.

There are also shots of demonstrations and street markets, and amongst her less polemical photographs are some delightfully evocative beach views. The review copy's binding was insecure; but the book, beautifully recreating the images from the original negatives, is an excellent resume of the work of a photographer whose penetrating vision and social commitment reveal so much of her world to us. The selection, and introductory essay, are by her brother, Wolf Suschitzky.

Harry Watton

Mike Seaborne. *Shelters. Living Underground in the London Blitz: Images by Bill Brandt and others, and Cyril Arapoff.* London in the Thirties. Dirk Nisben Publishing, 1987. £2.95 each.

ANOTHER two of this publisher's excellent series, both maintaining the very high standard of photographic reproduction we have now come to expect from this source. With regard to the accompanying captions, I would like a little more. Were we to see these pictures at an exhibition, the brevity of the information would be acceptable. In books such as these, in which the emphasis is on the photographic content, the compilers have also to be very aware of including too much text. However, whereas we have limited times at exhibitions and our attention is taken largely by the pictures, a book is different. We can revisit our collection at any time we choose. It is on these return visits to our books that further observations and queries arise in our minds and it is then that more information is desirable.

It is probably the case that Mike Seaborne, the compiler, had very few details about the contents, photographers generally being interested only in pictures. Dare we ask present and future photo-historians to include names, occupations, locations, etc., where possible or available? It is important. In spite of these observations, let me urge you to get these books for the collections of pictures they contain and the superb reproductions. The work and vision of the photographers well deserve wide circulation. Pictures are for looking at.

John Curtis

Charles Poulsen *Scenes from a Stepney Youth.* With original drawings by Min Tabor. THAP books, 1988. £3.95.

CHARLES Poulsen's youth was spent in the Jewish Whitechapel of the nineteen twenties and thirties. He describes in detail typical scenes of the period: the meticulous steps taken to try to eradicate bed bugs, the preparation for and joys of a day spent in Victoria Park with friends and later the crafts and workers in a furrier's workshop.

It is the sketches of people which are especially memorable. Among the characters who brightened the area — off Whitechapel Road — were Welsh brothers in a cowshed and a Jewish scribe drawing a scroll of the Law. Above all, there were the different ways people adapted to what were hard times even when work was available. He tells of two pious brothers happily debating the Talmud while their workshop stood idle. By contrast the author describes how he himself became a communist. The words are supplemented by Min Tabor's evocative drawings and several apposite photographs. The result is a book that gives a vivid feeling of what life was like and is remarkable value at the price.

H. David Behr

Charles Preece. *Woman of the Valleys.* The Story of Mother Shepherd. New Life Publications, 1988. £8.95.

THIS is the story of a most extraordinary woman, born in Wales in 1836 at a time of mass unemployment and dire poverty, who spent a considerable part of her life in East London where living conditions in the mid-Victorian era were little better than those in the Rhondda, and yet who wielded an influence which affected the lives of thousands. A would-be suicide, she overcame drunkenness to become a pillar of support to William Booth and one of the pioneers of the Salvation Army. She worked as an early probation officer, health visitor, social worker and police court missionary, in addition to her open-air evangelism.

The depressed mining areas of the Welsh valleys was a good training ground for work among the debauchees of Ratcliff Highway, the gambling dens and squalor of Limehouse and the sweat-shops of Whitechapel and Bethnal Green. This story, written by her great-grandson, shows how living conditions in Wales and East London were very similar — I recall Welsh miners singing in the streets of Poplar and Stepney as recently as the 1930s.

One might have wished that the author had said more about Pamela Shepherd's social and probation work where, it was said, few who came under her supervision ever turned again to crime. Perhaps, also, the story places greater emphasis on the early development of the Salvation

Army rather than on 'Mother Shepherd' herself. It is rare indeed to find a woman of such honesty, courage and determination making an impact far beyond what any Victorian sociologist would have imagined for one of her sex. It is interesting to note the extent to which women like Pamela Shepherd (Catherine Hine, Nancy Cunningham, etc) were able to find their place in life under the umbrella of the 'Army' and live to an old age, as did Booth himself.

I commend this book to all who have an interest in late Victorian sociology particularly in East London, and in the heights which are still attainable for those with courage, determination and a strong sense of purpose.

A. H. French

Norma Ashworth. *Wapping tales.* Carterton (New Zealand), Ampersand Publishing Associates, 1988. (Distributed in U.K. by THAP Books £5.95 PBK).

NORMA Ashworth's stories of her life and times in Wapping were originally broadcast as a series on Radio New Zealand in 1986 and 1988. Mrs Ashworth lived at Pierhead from the mid-1970's to the mid-1980's, so that she was ideally placed to observe the incredible transformation of a hitherto unglamorous part of the East End into an estate agent's dream time. Her book, however, is chiefly taken up with accounts of the unusual characters she met and the adventures she underwent as a Kiwi at large in the East End.

Mrs Ashworth conveys with considerable charm a sense of the enclosed world which even then was rapidly disappearing before the onward march of the developers. She quickly makes friends with the locals, frequents the neighbourhood hostels, wanders the riverside, tries to correlate Wapping with the 'Alf Garnett' image so familiar from television. She experiences a delicious thrill on the 'edges of gangsterdom' as she follows in the steps of the Krays, meets the Thames River Police, has her fortune told at the hairdressers by a mysterious West Indian, and successfully manages to integrate herself as a local in Wapping Lane. The garden flourishes, neighbours drop in for tea and sympathy — and the first tentative footsteps of the yuppies are noted with some puzzlement. As 'her' Wapping starts to disintegrate in the face of the newcomers, Mrs Ashworth decides to move back home.

If the chapters tend to read a little like an East End version of 'Neighbours', this is ultimately no bad thing. Mrs Ashworth's Wapping already sounds a bit like Paradise Lost. The book is illustrated with some charming drawings by Ann Thomson.

David Webb

Madge Darby — *Waeppa's People.* A History of Wapping. Connor and Butler, 1988. £3.50.

WAPPING, traditionally, has been a close-knit East End community laying behind St. Katharine's Dock and Commercial Road. Wappingite Madge Darby describes in great detail the growth of the area from being marsh land beyond the Roman wall, through Queen Matilda, who founded the Royal Hospital of St. Katharine, to the building of the docks, the blitz, and up to the present day with its marinas and warehouses converted into modern flats. The book adds to our local knowledge and will be particularly enjoyed by all who thought of Wapping as a secret place.

Doreen Kendall

*Buildings at Risk in Hackney.* The Hackney Society, 1988. £2.50 includes post and package.

THIS well produced booklet is based on survey work carried out on historic buildings whose future existence is under threat for a variety of reasons. Elisabeth McKellar and Elisabeth Aston's work has been well served by David Heath's excellent photography. The buildings at risk range from the obvious subjects of dereliction (Sutton House, The Round Chapel and Haggerston Library) to industrial buildings like the Atlas works at Hackney Wick. In each case a brief summary is provided of the background to the problems. Not all is doom and gloom: Sutton House is now the centre of considerable activity and Haggerston Library is set to take on new life as a night club. A useful appendix gives a summary of those buildings surveyed in 1980 and again in 1986 with notes on demolition and radical alterations. In general, the booklet provides a useful complement to the Hackney Society's previous survey of South Shoreditch.

David Mander





*Mundy's Place, Stepney, July 1937: one of a dozen illustrations of local scenes in the East London History Society's Calendar for 1990. Details from Bradley Snooks. 28 Pulteney Close, E3 (1980 9592).*

Richard Morris. *Churches in the Landscape*. Dent. 1989. £25.00.

RICHARD Morris, author of two previous books on Britain's Churches, is Research Officer at the Council of British Archaeology and draws his inspiration for the present book from the work of a school of archaeologists who see our landscape as a 'palimpsest' on which successive generations have left their impressions. Our churches, they conclude, and the parochial system they reflect, are where they are and as they are by virtue of the political, economic and social circumstances of their histories.

The chapter sequence is chronological, beginning with the Romans and concluding in the late 19th century, with the emphasis throughout on the church 'as a place'. Thus, by an irony of history, many of our early churches stand on the sites of heathen shrines and burial grounds; in the 4th and 5th centuries the Christians began by seeking to expunge every trace of paganism, but were thwarted by the popular reverence for traditionally 'holy places'. East Ham parish church, on the site of a Roman cemetery, is an example.

In succeeding centuries monasteries became a major force in both ecclesiastical and political matters. They were largely financed by royal families and powerful nobles, who also built churches on their estates, and from the 8th century on rich men everywhere erected churches, primarily for their households and usually so placed as to grace the view from the big house. Their religious zeal was perhaps strengthened by the money to be made from churchyard burials and the one third reduction of tithes allowed to church owners.

By the 10th century stone was replacing timber and a prolific period of church building or rebuilding began. By 1150 most of today's parish churches were in existence. Urban development throughout the 12th and 13th centuries demanded ever more churches and for the first time many were built in local High Streets; examples in Greater London leap to mind, Homerton, Bow, Romford, Enfield. From this time on the costs of upkeep and improvements, towers and steeples, windows and clerestoreys, were increasingly borne by the churchgoers: pew-rents were introduced, sometimes imposed, and the chantry service of prayers for the dead in purgatory was paid for in lifetime and often thereafter by bequests in wills.

We move into more familiar territory: the Dissolution and seizure of monastic lands by the newly-rich; the London fire and the Wren plan; the 1711 Commission for new churches as London suburbs burgeoned; the challenge of the nonconformists to the Established Church. On these and other episodes in more recent church history Morris is consistently interesting.

After poring long over this remarkable and sometimes difficult book, close-packed with fact, argument and instances, I feel amply rewarded as I turn the last of its 500 pages.

Stanley Reed

Stan Newens. *Working Together*. A short History of the London Co-operative Society Political Committee. CRS Political Committee, (78-102 The Broadway, E15 1NL), 1988. £11.95.

EAST London born Stan Newens has been an active member of the Co-op movement and represented its political wing in Parliament from 1974 to 1983, and more recently has been a Euro M.P., yet he has found time to do a short history of the London Co-op Society Political Committee.

The struggle against the ugly face of early industrial capitalism produced its visionaries (Robert Owen) and its more practical groups (the Rochdale Pioneers). Their political views were varied, but there was a growing general awareness that in order to advance their ideas, political representation was required. So, in 1857 George Holyoake stood as a candidate for Tower Hamlets, though it was not until the present century that a political Co-op Party was established and provided its first Cabinet Minister in the 1940s Attlee government.

The aims of the Political Committee had been boldly set out in 1936. The Co-op is not only a trading organisation. It tries to improve conditions, education, leisure and so on. The visionaries and the practical pioneers had become a national conscious force in British society. The significance of Mr Newens' book is that he has lifted the corner of a curtain behind which is a glorious history of the Co-op movement. What about the role of C.W.S., Co-op Bank, Woodcraft Folk, Women's Guilds, the Co-op Halls, Co-op Travel and Housing Associations,



the Education Committees, *Reynolds Newspaper*. etc? What is required is a definitive book on Co-op history. Could not a Chair in this important branch of our history be sent up at our East London Queen Mary College?

H. Joseph (Co-op No. 355373 I.C.S.)

James Howson — *First in Essex*. One hundred years of Library Service in Barking, 1888 — 1989. Barking Libraries, 1989.

IT is heartening to note that, on the 15th November 1888, the Barking Local Board agreed, 'cheerfully and without a dissentient voice' to ask the electorate whether or not they wished to have a public lending library in their town. By a majority of 680 votes it was decided to take advantage of the Libraries Act — albeit 38 years after the act was passed.

In those far-off days of male supremacy it was noted that many votes had been disqualified because they had been 'signed by ladies for their husbands'. This began a long association between the people of Barking and the ever expanding library service which is ably chronicled by James Howson in his new publication.

In his usual erudite and lucid style Mr Howson provides a record of the various episodes in the history of the service. He writes that the first public library opened in May 1888 in two rooms of the disused Barking Workhouse in North Street — rooms which had first to be vacated by the Conservative Club. He traces the tribulations and the successes; even in 1893 there were problems of funding and the library was taken to task for having overspent its budget by £16. After 1909 borrowers were actually allowed to take their books directly from the shelves, and an era of self service libraries had dawned!

In 1924 the Central Library in Ripple Road — a building which many people in Barking will remember well — was built at a cost of more than £11,000. Other library buildings across the borough followed and the reading population grew. Following the war more expansion of services took place, and then, tragedy:- the arsonist's fire of 1967 which destroyed the neo-Georgian Central Library, but which resulted in an excellent new facility being opened in 1974.

Mr Howson's publication provides facts and anecdotes aplenty. Its easy-to-read text will interest general readers and history buffs alike and is well served by several appendices (though the appendix dealing with annual issue statistics ends, disappointingly, at 1939). The text is fleshed out with fascinating photographs showing Barking and its libraries in the past and present. Almost as interesting as the narrative itself is the reprinting of Kellys Directory for 1890 listing many familiar family names and addresses. For lovers of Barking's past, for those who bathe in nostalgia or for students of librarianship this book provides a factual chronicle and an interestingly good read.

Graham Gunn

#### NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

David H. Leaback, Ph.D., M.Sc., is Managing Director of Biolink Technology Ltd. He has had about 100 papers published on various scientific subjects. Rosemary Taylor, in a series of talks, has drawn attention to many forgotten women who played important parts in our local history. Sam Vincent has had articles in the East of London Family History Society's *Cockney Ancestor*. Rev. Ken Leech is Director of the Runnymede Trust, which has recently moved to Princelet Street. Chris Lloyd and Harry Watton are at the Local History Library in Bancroft Road, David Mander is at the Hackney Archives Department and David Webb is at the Bishopsgate Institute. Ann Sansom and Alfred French have been active in the East London History Society since its foundation in 1952; John Curtis, Doreen Kendall and David Behr all serve on the Society's committee. Graham Gunn and H. Joseph are teachers, the latter now retired. Stanley Reed recently gave a talk to the society on his childhood and youth in West Ham.

#### SOME RECENT HISTORY ITEMS RELATING TO EAST LONDON

##### Books and Booklets

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|-----------------------------------|---|
| Bellamy, Joyce, Saville,          | <i>Dictionary of Labour</i>   |
| John and Martin, David            | <i>Biography</i> , Vol VIII. Macmillan, 1987.   |
| Blumenfeld, Simon                 | <i>Phineas Kahn: Portrait of an Immigrant</i> . Lawrence & Wishart, 1988 (reprint).                   |
| Citizens Advice Bureau            | <i>Scrapbook 1939-1989</i> . Tower Hamlets CAB, 1989.   |
| Daunton, Claire                   | <i>The London 1900-1920</i> . The Hospital.   |
| Eade, John                        | <i>The Politics of Community. The Bangladeshi Community in East London</i> . Gower, 1989.             |
| Essl, Graham                      | <i>A Pictorial Review of the London Chest Hospital</i> . The Hospital, 1989.                          |
| Hewison, Judy                     | <i>Marchants Hill 1939-1989</i> . The Centre, 1989.   |
| Horne, M. A. C.                   | <i>The Central Line</i> . Douglas Rose, 1987.   |
| Melnick, Samuel                   | <i>Princes (later Princelet) Street Synagogue in Victorian Times</i> (a copy in THLHC).               |
| Thorne, Will                      | <i>My Life's Battles</i> . Lawrence & Wishart, 1989 (reprint).  |
| Watson, Julian and Gregory, Wendy | <i>Free for All. A Celebration of 100 years of the Woolwich Ferry</i> . Greenwich Libraries, 1988.    |
| Wedel, Christiane                 | <i>Die Theatertopographie des Londoner East End im 19 Jahrhundert</i> . Peter Lang (Frankfurt), 1987. |

##### Articles

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|---------------------------------------|--|
| Ceserani, David                       | 'The East London of Simon Blumenfeld's <i>Jew Boy</i> ' in <i>The London Journal</i> , vol. 13, no. 1, 1987-1988.  |
| Ceserani, David                       | 'Willy Goldman — looking for "The Maggot in the Apple"' in <i>The Jewish Quarterly</i> winter 1988-1989.   |
| Cohen, Arnold                         | 'The Baal Shem of London: charlatan or saint?' in <i>Hamaor</i> , Pesach, 1989.  |
| East of London Family History Society | Recent issues of <i>Cockney Ancestor</i> include articles on the 'Princess Alice' disaster and on a weaver (Autumn, 1988 and Winter 1988-1989 respectively). |
| Farrel, Terry and Jimmy Tomlin, David | 'A glancing view of childhood; Bow Bridge Island Council Estate 1947-1967' in <i>Oral History</i> , vol. 16, no. 1, Spring 1988.                             |
| Finestein, Israel                     | 'East End, West End; Anglo-Jewry and the Great Immigration' in <i>The Jewish Quarterly</i> , winter 1988-1989.   |
| Glashman, Judy                        | 'London Synagogues in the late nineteenth century: Design in Context' in <i>London Journal</i> , vol. 13, no. 1, 1987-1988.                                  |
| Island History Trust                  | Recent issues of the <i>Newsletter</i> include a series of articles on the name 'Isle of Dogs' (March, April, May 1989).                                     |
| Marriot, John                         | '"West Ham": London's Industrial centre and Gateway to the World, 1: Industrial isolation, 1840-1910' in <i>London Journal</i> , vol. 13, no. 2, 1987-1988.  |
| Newham History Society                | <i>Newsletter</i> no. 6 (summer 1989) has short articles on 'Holidays of Yesteryear' and on Dick Turpin's Newham associations.                               |

- O'Day, Rosemary 'Retrieved Riches — Charles Booth's Life and labour of the People in London' in *History Today*, April, 1989.
- Sainsbury, Frank 'The Silvertown Explosion' in *Newham History Society Occasional Papers*, no. 2, Nov. 1988.
- Thomson, J. T. 'Hannah Snell — the Female Marine' in *Military Modelling*, Dec, 1988.

#### Unpublished Works

- Fawell, C. A. 'A Short History of Whitechapel Library 1892-1965.' North London Polytechnic dissertation, 1987.
- McGrath, Anne 'East End Anti-Semitism 1900-1905, with special reference to the British Brothers League'. North London Polytechnic, course work, 1988.

(Copies of both these works are in Tower Hamlets Local History Library).

#### Some recent additions to archives

##### (a) Hackney Archives Department

Grays Menswear Ltd. Records c 1925-1940 (menswear business in Mare Street with branches in East London, Central London, Windsor and St. Albans). Ref D/B/GRA.

Hackney Benevolent Pension Society. Additional records Ref D/S 6/20-29.

Eleanor Lodge Masonic papers 1892-1936. Ref M 4307.

Loddiges family. Family papers 1758-1882 (Family owned a plant nursery in Hackney). Ref D/F/LOD.

Mare Street Baptist Church later Frampton Park Baptist Church. Records 1798-1988. Ref D/E 232 MAR 2-9. Includes minutes 1798-1861.

Hackney Council Press and Public relations. Copies of videos of television appearance by councillors and training film 1970s-1980s. Rough listed D7.

Cambridge Heath Congregational Church records 1861-1938;

Victoria Park Congregational Church records 1869-1901.

Shrubland Road Congregational Church records 1942-1972. Ref D/E 233 CAM. Deposit also includes Morley Hall material.

Hackney Methodist Circuit: additional records Bethnal Green Circuit local preachers meetings 1878-1896; Bruce Hall Mission scrapbook 1890-1893. Ref D/E 234 B.

##### (b) Tower Hamlets Local History Library.

Records of G. W. Mansell Ltd., iron and steel merchants of Cahir Street, Millwall E14, 1930-1971. TH/8353.

Records of Stepney Meeting House 1644-1974. TH/8337.

Papers re. Dr. H. J. O'Brien and Dr. C. Cotter in practice at 96 East India Dock Road, 1911-1967. TH/8336.

Hamlet of Ratcliff (Stepney Greencoat) School records, 1710-1970. TH/8328.